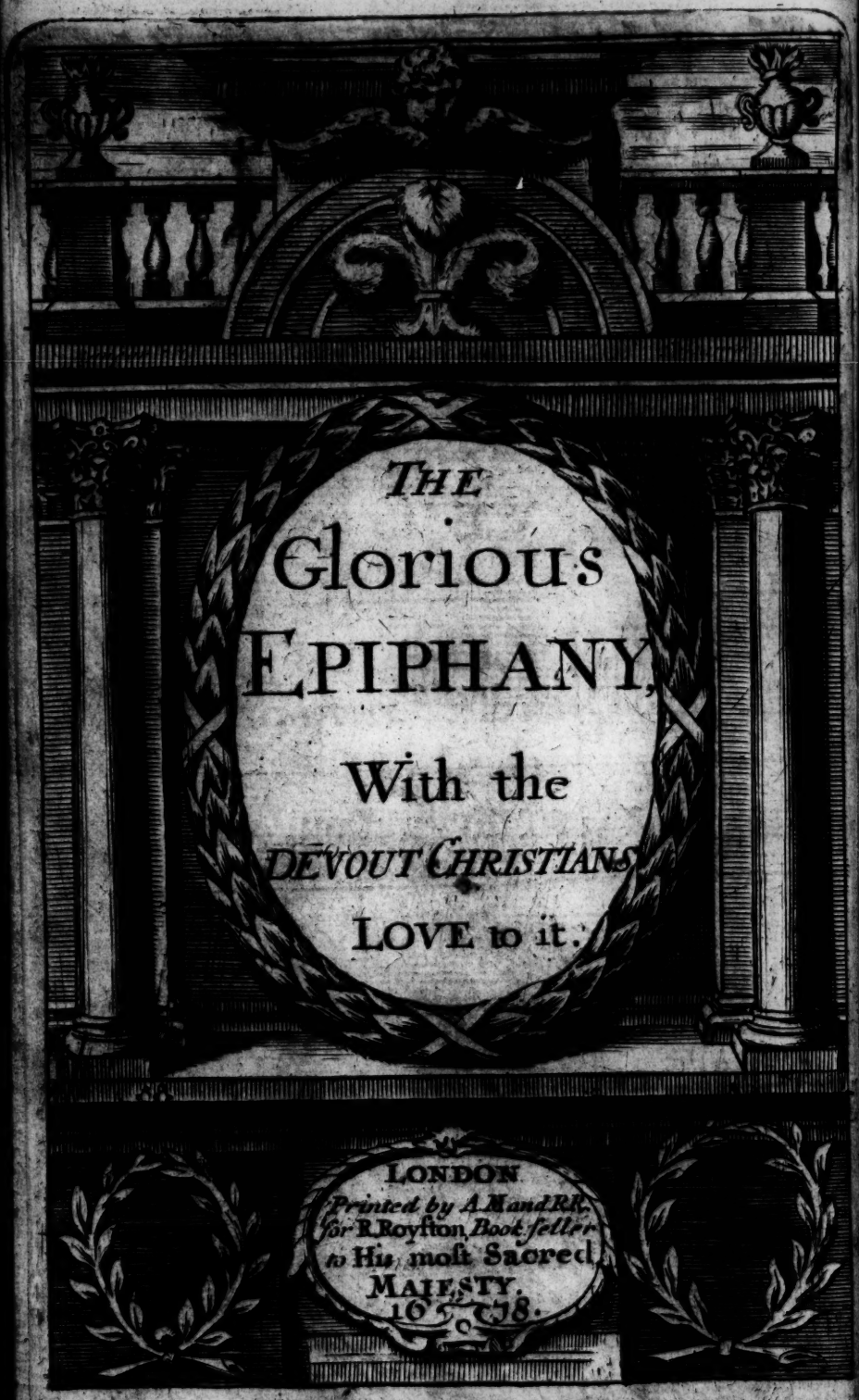

THE
Glorious
EPIPHANY,
With the
DEVOUT CHRISTIANS
LOVE to it.
LONDON
Printed by A. M and R. R.
for R. Royston, Book-seller
to His most Sacred
MAJESTY.
1678.

THE Glorious Epiphany, WITH THE *DEVOUT CHRISTIANS* LOVE to it.

By *SYMON PATRICK*, D. D. and Dean of *Peterburgh*.

The Second Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for *Rich. Royston*, Bookseller to His most Sacred Majesty, at the *Angel* in *Amen-Corner*. MDCLXXXVI.

TO THE
MOST REVEREND
Father in GOD
WILLIAM
By Divine Providence
Lord Archbiſhop
OF
CANTERBURY,
Primate and Metropolitan of all *England*,
and one of His MAJESTIES
moſt Honourable *Privy Council.*

HAving compoſed a Treatiſe, *Moſt Reverend Father*, concerning the Appearing of the Chief Shepherd of our Souls

(whom we look for from Heaven at the laſt Day) I know not to whom more properly to addreſs it, than to Your Grace: whom our Lord hath been pleaſed to intruſt with the high Office of preſiding in Chief over that part of his Flock which he hath gathered within the Fold of this Kingdom: A Charge of which, as Your Grace was not in the leaſt ambitious, ſo all judged You highly worthy; and may well look upon it as a token God hath ſtill ſome kindneſs for this Church (which hath been ſo long miſerably diſtracted, and torn in pieces by many Sects and different Factions) that He hath been pleaſed to guide His Majeſty to the Choice of a Perſon ſo rarely qualified, both with Piety and Prudence,

Prudence, with Uprightneſs and inflexible Vertue, as well as with Learning and other Accompliſhments, to be the Prime Paſtor of it.

This, I am ſure, makes ſome Good men hope that He intends ſtill *to feed us in our green Paſtures, and to lead us forth beſide the waters of comfort*: and hath moved me to take the humble boldneſs (among the Crowds who come upon that Errand) of approaching Your Grace in this manner; to congratulate to Your Grace that ſingular honour, and to the Church that great happineſs.

For the continuance of which, as we ought to pray moſt ar-

dently, ſo to do our Duties faithfully in our ſeveral Stations: and to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, wherewith in this Church, we are fed ſo conſtantly, and ſo abundantly repleniſhed. Unto which as nothing can more effectually excite us, than the ſerious Contemplation of his Appearing again to give Salvation to all the Faithful; and eſpecially to beſtow upon all Faithful Paſtors (who as Saint *Peter* ſpeaks, feed his Flock willingly, and are Examples to it) a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away: ſo I hope I have done ſomething in this Treatiſe to draw the thoughts and the affections of thoſe who piouſly peruſe it, to ſo lovely a Spectacle.

Of

Of this Your Grace is ſo good a Judge, that it was a Principal Motive to my confidence in this Dedication. For next to the pleaſure of Compoſing ſuch a Work, is the ſatisfaction of addreſſing it to a Patron no leſs Pious than Knowing: who hath accuſtomed himſelf to devout Meditations, and feels in his own Breaſt the ſame holy Motions, which he ſees and loves in another. This was a Reflection, wherewith that Great Man St. *Hierome* was much delighted, when he was writing his Commentaries upon the Prophet *Iſaiah*: In whoſe words I may more fitly end this Preface to Your Grace, than he begins one of his (upon the *ſixteenth* Book) unto *Euſtochium*.

"It

"It is an Excellent Sentence of "the moſt Eloquent Orator, that "*Arts would be happy, if none did* "*judge of them but onely Artiſts.* "And leſt I ſhould ſeem to bor- "row an Example only from "Prophane Writers, this is the "very thing which the *Prophet* re- "preſents in other words, *Bleſſed* "*is he that ſpeaketh in the ears of them* "*that hearken.*

They are the words, I find, of the Son of *Sirach*, xxv. *Ecclus* 9. whom he calls a *Prophet* only in a large ſenſe (for in his famous *Prologus Galeatus* he ſtrikes this Book out of the Canon of the Scripture) becauſe he had an excellent Faculty to comprize in a few words many profitable inſtructions. Amongſt which Saint *Hie-*

rome

rome ſeaſonably called this to mind (as he was writing upon the Scriptures, to one that loved them, and was well verſed in them) which is one of the *Ten* things there mentioned by that Wiſe man, whereby he thought he might be made completely happy.

And of this happineſs (to ſpeak ſtill in the words of that Father) Your Grace hath made us Partakers: having a Palate to taſte what is devout, as well as to diſcern what is learned and judicious. To the latter I do not pretend; but hope there is ſomething of the former, which will recommend this Work to Your Grace's good liking, and make it acceptable likewiſe to all thoſe

that

that love our Lord Jeſus in ſincerity.

To whoſe powerful Protection and Guidance I moſt humbly commend Your Grace; beſeeching Him to ſtrengthen You to ſuſtain the Burthen of ſo weighty a Charge, and to inſpire You with all the Prudence, Reſolution and Zeal, which are neceſſary in theſe difficult Times: that by Your Grace's wiſe Conduct, God's true Religion may be ſo ſettled and firmly eſtabliſhed among us, and ſincere Piety, together with Chriſtian Learning and Knowledge ſo thrive and proſper every where; that this Church (as Saint *Paul* ſpeaks of that of *Theſſalonica*) may be *your Joy and Glory, and Crown of rejoicing,*

cing, before our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming.

Which is and ſhall be the Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's moſt humble

and dutiful Servant,

Symon Patrick.

TO THE

Devout Readers.

SO adorable, as Tertullian *ſpeaks, is the fulneſs of the Holy Scriptures, that the more we ſearch into them, the greater Treaſures of Divine Wiſdom we diſcover there to employ our meditations: and when we think we have found out all that belongs to one Subject, new things preſent themſelves to fill us with greater joy and admiration. It is not long ſince I ſent abroad ſo large a Treatiſe of that* Eternal Life *which Chriſt hath promiſed, that it ſeemed to comprehend all that the holy Books have delivered in that Argument: But upon further thoughts,*

thoughts, I find, there is one most comfortable consideration still remains, which is the Subject of this present Treatise. Wherein I have endeavoured to represent what a joy it will be to see our Lord himself come again from Heaven, attended with his holy Angels, to fetch us up thither to live with him for ever: and what a Passion we should now have for him, and for his Coming; whereby we should run to meet him, and receive before-hand some glimpses of that Glory, wherein he will appear, and we together with him.

The Greatness of that Bliss we shall then receive, ought, no doubt, to be the frequent Subject of our serious Meditation. Which will be the greater (as I have said in another place) because we must stay so long for it, as till the Day of Christ's Appearing. And it is a singular comfort, we must confess, to know that

that it will be ſo exceeding Great: though that very thing cannot but make us the more deſirous, he would be pleaſed to haſten it. For whatſoever joy we ſhall have before that time (as no Queſtion the Paradiſe into which our Lord entred immediately after his Death, before he was crowned with Glory and Honour, was a Place of very much happineſs) it will not be compleated till he come again to bring us that Great Salvation, which the Scripture ſpeaks of, at the Reſurrection of the Dead.

When we are at reſt from our labours in the other World, I cannot but think we ſhall long for that happy Day; and that it will be part of our joy to expect it, with perfect aſſurance of its Coming. And therefore it cannot but be a very delightful Entertainment, to think of it, to hope and wiſh for it now, as the greateſt refreſhment we have of our la-

hours, here in this life. For while our thoughts and desires are thus employed, we tread, if I may so speak, upon the Threshold of Paradise, and begin to enter into the joy of our Lord.

But there is one Expression of Saint Paul, *which I mentioned in the Conclusion of the second* Advice to a Friend (p. 64.) *which excels all the rest: for he makes it the proper Mark of a Christian to* LOVE his Appearing. *Which I have undertaken therefore to explain in this Discourse: that devout Christians may know, what the Blessedness of that time will be; and what the Affection is we should have for it; and what Reason there is, we should be so affected towards it. The Subject is so unusual that I have not seen it any where handled; which made me the more willing to set about it: that I might in part both satisfie the desire I have to do all the*

honour

honour and ſervice I am able to our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus; and the delight I take in explaining his Holy Scriptures. Of which to be ignorant, is to be ignorant of Chriſt himſelf, as St. Hierome's words are, in the beginning of his firſt Book of Commentaries upon Iſaiah.

I do not expect indeed, nor is it poſſible, that you ſhould have your minds always poſſeſſed with ſuch thoughts, and that your hearts ſhould perpetually burſt out into ſuch paſſions, as I have here expreſſed: I my ſelf cannot think them over again, nor any like them, whenſoever I pleaſe. It is enough, (good Readers) and as much as we can reach, if you be thus affected at certain times, when your Spirit is moſt ſerious and retired into it ſelf; and if you endeavour to habituate your ſelves to ſuch thoughts and deſires, that they may be ſo familiar and natural,

as to become easie and delightful, when you will stand most in need of them.

More particularly, when the days, wherein you live, are evil; or when you are under any private trouble; or when you would at any time retreat from the World, and solace your self in Angello cum Libello, in a Nook with a Book (to speak with Tho. à Kempis, who thought this the highest pleasure upon Earth) or when the Church calls upon you to sequester your self for Devotion; and especially when Old Age you feel creeping upon you, and you think of drawing your selves by degrees out of this Life: At all such Seasons as these (and chiefly when you come near to your Journeys end) this Prospect cannot but be most pleasant; and such aspirations and sighs after the Day of Christ's Appearing, be the most ravishing Musick; and to be transported with such ardent longings, as are here represented,

repreſented, make Afflictions light and eaſie, ſolitary Retirements exceeding ſweet and delightful, Old Age cheerful, and Death it ſelf very comfortable.

But you muſt not imagine that Love *can arrive at its higheſt pitch preſently: nor muſt you be troubled or diſcouraged, becauſe you cannot inſtantly, or when you would, raiſe in your ſelves ſuch paſſionate longings after Chriſt's Appearing. Love is a thing that grows, and, as I may ſay, ſteals upon us by degrees; and the paſſion we feel, at certain Seaſons, diſpoſes us by little and little to be perfectly in love with that Good, which is ſet before us. A Good ſo great and ſo deſireable, that we do not follow our own beſt inclinations, if we uſe not our utmoſt endeavours to be ſo happy as to behold that* admirable Countenance *(to ſpeak in the language of* St. Chryſoſtom*) of our Bleſſed Saviour the King of Glory.* "*For if*

* Homil. penult. in S. Johan. p. 925.

(*faith he* *) "*when we read the Story of*
"*his Life, Death and Reſurrection, we*
"*are ſo inflamed, that our hearts burn*
"*within us, and we wiſh we had lived*
"*in thoſe Days when he was converſant*
"*on Earth, that we might have heard*
"*his Voice, and ſeen his Face, and kept*
"*his Company, and touched him, and*
"*miniſtred unto him: think with your*
"*ſelves what it will be to ſee him, not*
"*any longer in a mortal Body, nor doing*
"*humane things, but attended with the*
"*Hoſts of Angels, when we alſo our*
"*ſelves ſhall be freed from this mortali-*
"*ty, and, beholding him, ſhall enjoy ſuch*
"*felicity as exceeds all expreſſion.*

"*Let us do all we can, I beſeech you,*
"*that we may not miſs of ſo great a Glo-*
"*ry. There is nothing too hard for us,*
"*if we have a will to it; nothing too*
"*burdenſom, if our mind be not averſe*
"*from it. For if we ſuffer or endure,*

"*we*

" *we ſhall alſo reign with him. And*
" *what is it to ſuffer? If we bear afflic-*
" *tions, if we endure perſecutions, if*
" *we walk in the narrow way; which to*
" *Nature indeed is laborious, but to*
" *them who chuſe it, and have a good*
" *will to it, is light and eaſie, by the*
" *hope of things to come.* For our light
" affliction which is but for a mo-
" ment works for us a far more
" exceeding and eternal weight of
" Glory; whilſt we look not at
" the things which are ſeen, but at
" thoſe which are not ſeen.

" *Let us lift up our eyes then from*
" *theſe things here, and direct them to-*
" *wards Heaven; let us imagine always*
" *theſe unſeen joys, and look upon them.*
" *For if we be converſant with theſe*
" *things, we ſhall neither be inticed with*
" *the ſweet things of this World, nor*
" *ſink under the Load of thoſe that are*

" *grievous to be born. But we ſhall*
" *laugh theſe, and all ſuch like, to ſcorn;*
" *and never ſuffer any thing either to de-*
" *preſs us, or to puff us up: provided*
" *we ſtill ſtretch forth that deſire, and*
" *look towards that love. What did I*
" *ſay, that we ſhall not feel the evil*
" *things of this World to be grievous to*
" *us? More than that, we ſhall ſcarce*
" *mind them, or think that we ſee them.*
" *For ſuch is the nature of Love, that it*
" *makes us imagine we ſee even thoſe*
" *who are abſent from us (but much de-*
" *ſired by us) every day with us.* Με-
" γάλη γὰρ ἡ ἀγάπης τύραννις, *for great is*
" *the Sovereign Power, and, as we*
" *ſpeak, the tyranny of Love. It neg-*
" *lects all things, and ties the Soul faſt*
" *to thoſe it loves. And therefore if we*
" *thus love Chriſt Jeſus, all things here will*
" *ſeem but a Shadow, but an Image, but*
" *a Dream; and we alſo ſhall ſay, Who*
" *ſhall*

" ſhall ſeparate us from the love of " Chriſt ?

I pray God increaſe it, and make it abound more and more in all our hearts; that it may draw continually nearer towards its perfection: and makes us likewiſe to abound in all the fruits of the Spirit; which are the higheſt expreſſions of our love, and the beſt preparation for the Day of Chriſt's Appearing. For true Devotion doth not terminate in the heart: it goes further, and hath its effect in the life and actions. And eſpecially excites us to love, or charity towards all Mankind, and above all to our Chriſtian Brethren; as that which bears the greateſt reſemblance to him whom we love. The Commandment which St. Paul *charges* Timothy *to keep without ſpot, till our Lord's Appearing; was, for the moſt part, acts of Charity, as you will find briefly touched in this Book. And therefore*

fore these we ſhould labour to inliven by our Devotion; which is then truly Great, when it makes us ſo: and raiſes our Spirits above all anger and peeviſhneſs, covetouſneſs and eager deſire of Wealth, envy and vain ambition, evil ſurmizes and jealouſies, fretfulneſs and impatience, with all thoſe other mean qualities, which are the Enemies of Chriſtian Charity.

Some Readers perhaps may think, that I ſtrain Devotion here unto too great an heighth; and may be apt, at the entrance, to lay this Book aſide, becauſe they imagine I have expreſſed that paſſion of Love, which we ſhould endeavour after towards Chriſt's Appearing, beyond the truth: But I muſt intreat them, to do me the right and themſelves the kindneſs, to read on, and they will find in Concluſion, the whole Deſcription of it made good by the plain words of the holy Scriptures.

To the Devout Reader.

In the Study of which if we did all conſcientiouſly employ our ſelves, it is to be hoped God would ſtill preſerve to us that ineſtimable Treaſure: which contains ſuch admirable φάρμακα τῆς ψυχῆς *(as the forenamed Father ſpeaks) Medicines of the Soul; both to cure our Diſeaſes, and to comfort and reſtore our tired or languiſhing Spirits. For they are that* living water *our Lord ſpeaks of; which whoſoever drinks, hath in himſelf a* Well *or Fountain of comfort and perpetual refreſhment, ſpringing up into everlaſting life.*

xxij. Rev. 20.

COME LORD JESUS.

St. Chryſoſtom, *Tom.* vj. *p.* 709.

Ἡ Καθολικὴ καὶ τελευταία Καθαίρεσις, εὐχῆς ἔργον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν.

IMPRIMATUR

Hic Liber cui Titulus, [The Glorious Epiphany, *&c.*]

Geo. Thorp Reverendiſſimo in Chriſto Patri, & Dno, Dno Gulielmo Archiep. Cantuar. à Sacris Domeſticis.

April 30. 1678.

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CHAP. I.

Containing an Introduction to the ensuing Discourse.

WHEN we observe how the desire of life is so deeply fixed in all mankind, both in old and young, in Kings and Beggars, in Wise men and Fools, that (as *Lactantius* * well noteth) they will endure any miseries to preserve and prolong it; we are led thereby to this Consideration, That the highest and most perfect Good to which the soul of man aspires, is a life without end, and without those laborious toils and troubles which attend us here in this present world. We are naturally form'd to wish, that we may be so happy; and find no

* L. III. Instit. C. 12.

thought so sad and dismal as this, of being quite extinct, and never enjoying any more pleasure after we are laid in our Graves.

Upon which account it must be acknowledged that we are infinitely indebted to the Grace of God, who hath made that so sure, which is so desirable; and that our Blessed Saviour justly challenges our most ardent love and cheerful obedience, whose Religion is nothing else but an *acknowledgment of the Truth, which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life.* They are the words of S^t *Paul* (*Tit.* i. 1, 2.) which import that the Gospel is a Doctrine which teaches us to be pious, and promises to reward our piety with an happy immortality. This is the glorious hope of Christians; whose Master Christ Jesus (*who is our Hope,* 1 Tim. i. 1.) hath brought life and immortality to light; and made that which was but obscurely delivered in times past, as clear and bright as the Sun at noonday.

There are so many *Witnesses* of this, that their Testimonies have filled a large Volume. The FATHER, the WORD, the HOLY GHOST, have all declared

that

that *we have eternal life, and this life is in our Saviour, the Son of God.* So say the WATER also, the BLOOD, and the SPIRIT: they all consent in this Truth, That *Jesus is alive from the dead, and lives for evermore; and because he lives, we shall live also.*

Which welcome news filled the hearts of all those who believed it, with excessive joy, even when they *were in heaviness through manifold temptations,* 1 Pet. i. 6, 8. And why it should not have the same effect on us, there is no other reason can be given, but because we do not believe as they did. For they of whom S^t *Peter* speaks, had never seen our Lord when he was on earth, no more than we; nor had they any such sight of him, as S^t *Steven* and S^t *Paul* had, after he went to Heaven; and yet believing, they *rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

All our business therefore is, to settle this belief stedfastly in our minds. Which will have the greater power upon our hearts, when we consider the abundant Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us, and how excellent the Hope is which he hath given us. For he hath not only

assured us, that He hath all power in heaven and in earth; and that he will bestow the inestimable gift of immortality upon us: But that he himself will once more come from Heaven to crown us with it. *We know* (as I have shown in two former Treatises) *that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true: and this is the true God and Eternal Life*, which he hath revealed to us. But besides this *first coming* to teach us the will of God, to dye for our sins, and to open to us the Kingdom of Heaven, after He had shown us the way to it; He hath bid us believe there is a *Second:* When He will come to judge us by those Laws which he hath left his Church, and to put the Observers of them into the possession of that Heavenly Kingdom which He hath promised.

And there are none of the *Witnesses* who testifie that He is the King of Glory, but assure us of this also, that He will appear in that glory to take us up unto Himself. More especially the HOLY-GHOST, who (as *Epiphanius* * admirably speaks) is *the only Guide of Truth, the Expounder of holy Laws, the Inspirer of*

* Μόνος ὁδηγὸς ἀληθείας, νόμων ἐξηγητὴς ἁγίων, &c. *Hæres.* LXXIV. n. 10.

the Spiritual (or Christian) *Law*; *the Leader of the Prophets*, *the Teacher of the Apostles*, *the Luminary of the Evangelical Doctrines*; He made his Apostles and Evangelists clearly understand this to be our Saviour's meaning, and authorized them to proclaim this comfortable News to all Believers. Insomuch that S. *Paul* triumphs in this, when he was ready to be offered for the service of Christ, and the time of his departure was at hand, that there was *laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness*, *which the Lord* (saith he) *the righteous Judg shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

In the last part of which words there seems to me to be contained so much of the Christian Hope, that they deserve to be explained with the same care and labour that I have bestowed upon the RECORD which the *Father*, the *Son*, the *Holy-Ghost*, and all the other *Witnesses* have left us, to testifie that Jesus is the Son of God, and that in Him we have Eternal Life. For as it transports all true Believers with joy, to read of a *Crown of Life*, a *Crown of Glory*, a *Crown*

of Righteousness, which is laid up safe with our Lord in his Heavenly Sanctuary, as He himself and his Apostles in this and other places, confidently assure us: So it very much raises and encreases that joyful Hope, to know from their own mouths, that He who hath receiv'd and keeps it safely, will condescend so much as to appear again one day, to confer the very same felicity upon us, which He hath obtained himself; *who is crowned with glory and honour*.

Next to the belief of the truth of this report, there is nothing we are so much concerned to know, as who the persons are that shall wear this Crown, and have their heads eternally honoured with it. Piety it self, indeed, is very apt to perswade those in whom it lives, that the unfeigned practice of it, shall meet at last with some considerable recompence: But that it shall receive such a Royal, such a magnificent Reward, as deserves the name of a Crown of Eternal Glory, is a thing which that great Modesty and Humility (which is essential to true Piety, and its highest Ornament and Crown) forbids us to be too forward to conclude. A Person perhaps of such eminence and lustre

lustre as S^t *Paul* (one of the Stars of the first Magnitude in our Saviour's right hand) may be advanced hereafter to shine in such Majesty: But that we dull heavy souls should be thought worthy of the like favour, none but a man so Divinely illuminated, as He was by the power of the HOLY-GHOST, is sufficient to secure us.

And, blessed be God, we do not want such a Divine Testimony. For after this great Apostle had related what a course he had run, what agonies he had sustained, with what difficulties he had wrestled in the service of his blessed Master Jesus; and that he nothing doubted but He would remember him at his coming again, and confer the honour on him, which was laid up in Heaven for such victorious souls: He encourages all other Christians to comfort themselves with the same expectations, and not imagine they should lose the Crown (though they came far behind him in the holy race) if they did but LOVE THE APPEARING * of Christ Jesus.

* Ἀεὶ γὰρ ὁ λόγος ζῶν ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ ἔχων, καὶ ζωὴν τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀγαπῶσι δίδους. *Epiph. Hæres.* LIV. n. 5.

That's the particular Mark and Character which he gives of the persons to whom this honour shall be done. For the understanding of which, and that we may the better comprehend both the happiness it self, and that pious affection we ought to have for it (which is the principal drift of this Discourse,) we are to make an enquiry into these *three* things.

First, What may be conceived to be the meaning of this APPEARING of our Lord.

Secondly, What certainty there is of it. And,

Thirdly, What the LOVE is which they should bear to it, who hope to enjoy the blessings of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Shewing what is meant by the APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IT is not hard to give an account of the first of these, if we carefully observe and examine the Words whereby the Holy Books express it: And there are *Three* of them; every one of which signifie, that our Blessed Lord (who now reigns in unseen Glory) will once more appear visibly to all Mankind.

1. The first is Παρουσία, which we render only his *Coming*; but it is a different word from that in our Creed, and in its proper signification denotes his *presenting himself* to us, after he hath been thus long absent from us. In the Creed we profess to believe that He is ascended into Heaven ὅθεν μέλλει ἔρχεσθαι *from whence he shall come*, &c. But that we may know what kind of *Coming* we are to expect (and not imagine it is meerly by an invisible power, as he *came* to de-

stroy

ſtroy *Jeruſalem,*) we are to mind how the Apoſtles ſpeak of it as a Παρουσία; and teach us to underſtand that word in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, concerning his perſonal appearance to us. Thus S^t *Paul* diſcourſes to the *Corinthians*, 1. xv. 23. (where we firſt meet with this word in the Apoſtolical Writings) that every man ſhall ariſe from the dead, but in due order; *Chriſt the firſt-fruits; and then they that are Chriſt's, at his coming:* in perſon that is, as the King and the Judg of the World. For ſo he preſently after directs us to expound the word (xvi. 17.) when he declares the joy he had by the Παρουσία *coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus*, who (as *Theodoret* there notes) were the perſons that brought the Letter to him from the Church of *Corinth*. In ſuch a manner he believed Chriſt would come; and that he and thoſe Chriſtians he had converted, appearing *before him*, it would prove the greateſt joy and honour to him, to be able to preſent to that great King, ſuch a number of perſons who had been perſwaded by his Miniſtry to become his Subjects, 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 19. In ſhort, this is the word that is uſed in moſt other pla-

ces,

ces, where we read of the *Coming* of Christ. And presently after that last named (iij. 13.) he tells us, He will come attended *with all his Saints*; and therefore will personally appear, and shew himself in that Royal Majesty wherein He now reigns.

2. Thus the second Word still more fully informs us, which is Ἀποκάλυψις, the REVELATION *of Jesus Christ*: or his discovering himself again to the World, by coming out of that high and holy place where He now lives, but is not seen. So *Theophylact* expounds the word both upon 1 *Cor.* i. 7. and 2 *Thess.* i. 7. where he says, the Apostle calls the coming of Christ, by the name of his *Revelation*, to denote that though He be now with us, yet He is hid, and then shall be openly discovered. Which he borrows from S^t *Chrysostome*, whose words * are these; *The Apostle indicates, that though He be not seen, yet He is, and is present even now; and then will appear*, or shew himself visibly to the World. *Oecumenius* also writes to the same effect; and we may still further establish this Truth, by considering another word of the same import with this (and therefore I shall not

* In 1 *Cor.* i. 7.

mention

mention it distinctly by itself) very much used by St. *John*, who exhorts his Disciples to abide in Christ; that when ἐαν φανερωθῃ, *He shall be made manifest*, (or be shown to the World) we may not be ashamed *before him* at his coming, 1 *Joh.* ii. 28. So we translate the word in other places (though here it be rendred only *appear*), i. *Joh.* 3 5. iij. 21. especially in that remarkable place xxj. *Joh.* 1. where we read how he *shewed himself to them* at the Sea of *Tiberias*, and that this (*ver.* 14.) was the third time that He *shewed* or *made himself manifest* to them, after that He was risen from the dead. In the very same visible manner will He once more appear: and be as really manifested to raise us from the dead, and to give us life, as He was *manifested in the flesh* at first (1 *Tim.* iij. 16.) and again *shewed himself* after his Crucifixion, to be alive from the dead. For though our Life be now *hid with Christ in God*; yet when *Christ*, who is our *Life*, *shall appear*, or be manifested, *then shall we also appear with him in glory*, iij. Col. 4. Upon which words *Theophylact* hath this pertinent Gloss, *At his second coming Christ shall be openly manifested*, and *shewed to*

all

all as God; though now he be so hid, that it is the thing which is objected against him, and a pretence for mens unbelief. And to the same purpose *Theodoret* bids us note, how exceeding appositely * the Apostle speaks, when he saith, *Christ will then be manifested; who now is not seen by Christians, nor so much as known by Infidels.* But then will let no man remain ignorant of him; because every eye shall see him, and all men be forced to confess that He is the Lord of all.

* ἄχαν ἀρμοδίως εἴρηκε, &c.

3. For, *lastly*, to make this still more evident, it is called here (in the words I have undertaken to explain) and in many other places, his Ἐπιφάνεια APPEARING, in so clear and illustrious a manner, that S^t *Paul* bids us look for it as *that blessed Hope* of Christian people, far more splendid than any thing that hath yet been manifested. For it is *the glorious Appearing*, or the appearing of the glory *of the great God, and our Saviour*, ij. *Tit.* 13.

Which Epithet is to be carefully observed, because it distinguishes this Appearing from a former; and teaches us how we are to conceive of it. For every body knows (who hath any skill in these things)

things) that there is, at least, a double *Appearing* of Christ spoken of in the Holy Writings. One past, when he came and sensibly appeared, and was manifested in mortal flesh, for these two ends, to preach the Gospel, and to dye for our sins. Let the *Reader* consult the 1 *Tim.* i. 10. and ix. *Hebr.* 26. This is called the Appearing of God's Grace (ij. *Tit.* 11.) which was so manifested at this time, that it eclipsed all former discoveries that had been made of it.

The other is yet to come; when the same Lord will as sensibly appear to reward men according to the entertainment they have given his Gospel, and show himself as a Royal Priest, who hath so perfectly expiated our sins, and conquered all our Enemies, that he hath nothing then to do, but to give complete Salvation to his Servants. So you read ix. *Hebr.* 28. that to them who expect him, *He will appear the second time* (ὀφθήσεται make himself be seen, appear visibly) *without sin, unto salvation.* As in the former coming He was seen in our flesh, but appeared like a mean person, in the form of a Servant: so in this He will personally appear in our Nature;

but

but in greater splendour, in the form of a Prince; even as the Lord of all the World. And therefore in the first verse of this Chapter (2 *Tim.* iv. 1.) *his* KINGDOM and *his* APPEARING, are both put together, as things Contemporary: And as before, there was an Appearance of his Grace; so hereafter he is said to *appear in his Glory*, iij. *Col.* 4.

To these two *Appearings*, some add a *Third*, in the middle between them; and that was His appearing to destroy *Jerusalem*; and therewith the Persecutors of his Disciples; to whom, at that time, it must be acknowledged, He gave a mighty *Salvation*, or Deliverance. And the very Truth is, then He is said in the Gospel to come, xxj. *Joh.* 22. What if I will that he tarry ἕως ἔρχομαι *till I come*? And i. *Revel.* 7. ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται *Behold he cometh.* Nay, in a looser sense of the Word, that time is called by S^t *Matthew* his Παρουσία xxiv. 27, 37, 39. And by St. *Luke* the *Kingdom of God*, xxi. 31. (because then, He did exercise one part of his Royal Power in punishing Offenders) But I do not find that in any place it is called the *Revelation*, or the *Appearing* of the

Lord

Lord Jesus. For He did not appear in person when he came to destroy *Jerusalem*, as He did at his first coming, and will at his next; but only virtually, in such a desolation, as made it apparent that His mighty Power was the Author of it.

There are two places I know alledged by a Great Man, which he thinks found this way, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. and 1 *Tim.* vj. 14. But it is far more agreeable to the coherence of those places, to expound them of the *Appearing* we still expect. Of which, we may look upon his coming to destroy his Crucifiers, and save his Servants, as an Emblem and as a Pledg. For it demonstrated both the Power of our Lord Jesus, and his Faithfulness to his word: assuring us, that He will one day crown the patience and constancy of all his Friends with Eternal Life, and punish the insolence of his Enemies with everlasting Fire.

However, it is past all doubt, that in this place I am treating of, the Apostle speaks of the last and greatest appearing of our Saviour, to finish the work of our Redemption, and bestow the Crown of Righteousness, which is laid up in

Heaven

Heaven for all that love him. Which part of our Chriſtian Faith, I have ſhewn, is to be underſtood in this manner: That our Lord will in perſon preſent himſelf once more to the World, and be ſeen at the laſt day to be what he is, the King of Angels and Men, and all Creatures. For as at his firſt coming into the World He *appeared* in our likeneſs (which the Ancients called his *Epiphany*, a Name that ſtill ſticks to the laſt day of the Feaſt of his Nativity) and as He appeared in the ſame likeneſs when He roſe from the dead; and in that form and nature of a man went up into Heaven, and ſtill keeps it there, as ſeveral have ſeen ſince his Aſcenſion: ſo he will in like manner appear in the end of the World; only in greater Majeſty and Glory as becomes Him *who is over all, God bleſſed for ever, Amen*, ix. Rom. 5.

CHAP. III.

A further Illuſtration of the APPEARING *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

THERE is nothing to be added to what hath been ſaid, but only this: That the word *Epiphany* or APPEARING denotes not meerly the preſenting of himſelf in Perſon to the view of all the World; but the whole SHOW (as we call it) that will accompany his coming from Heaven, and all the things that ſhall be done by him, as the Lord and Judge of the World. He ſits now on the Throne of his Glory; and there ſhines in the ſplendor of the Divine Majeſty; and in that Majeſty will one day deſcend from thence into this Air: which the King of Heaven will never ſuffer his Son to do, without a moſt Royal and Glorious Attendance; ſutable to the quality of his Perſon, and to the dignity of his Office, which is to judge the quick and the dead.

This

This illuſtrious SHOW is deſcribed by our Apoſtle in the 1 *Theſ.* iv. 16. where he tells us that firſt of all, *He ſhall deſcend from Heaven,* ἐν κελεύσματι, *with a SHOUT.* That is, with great Acclamations, ſuch as uſe to be made when a mighty Conqueror appears and rides in Triumph. Thus we learn to underſtand it from xlvij. *Pſal.* 5. where *God* is ſaid to be *gone up with a SHOUT, the Lord with the ſound of a Trumpet.* That is, the Ark (which was the token of God's Preſence among them) returned to Mount *Sion,* with great and joyful Ovations of all the people, after the Conqueſt they got by the Divine aid over their powerful enemies. In ſuch a manner will our Saviour deſcend, as being about to complete his Victories by conquering Death it ſelf, *the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed.* For all the Heavenly Hoſts, we may well conceive, will be wonderfully pleaſed to ſee him go forth upon this deſign; and calling upon each other to perform to him the moſt cheerful ſervice upon that great day, will rejoyce to wait upon him in that moſt glorious Action, and triumph beforehand in the aſſured Victory which he will get over Hell and the Grave.

2. For then, ſaith the Apoſtle, will be *heard the voice of the Archangel*; that is, one of the chief Leaders and Commanders of the Celeſtial Hoſts (*MICHAEL*, I ſuppoſe, the Protector of the Chriſtian Church) ſhall march before his Majeſty: calling aloud to all the reſt of that Heavenly Company to follow after in their order.

3. And then will *the Trump of God ſound*; which the Apoſtle adds to ſignifie, after the manner of men, the powerful ſummons which will be iſſued forth to alarm all the World to attend at this great ſolemnity. For the gathering of the Congregation of *Iſrael* together was by the ſound of a Trumpet, as we find among other places, in iv. *Jer.* 5. *Blow ye the Trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and ſay Aſſemble your ſelves.* To which the Apoſtle ſeems to allude, and calls it *the Trump of GOD*, to diſtinguiſh it from all other; and to expreſs ſuch a mighty and penetrating ſound as ſhall be heard every where: Such an one as is fit to precede none but GOD the Father Almighty himſelf, or Him that holds his place, his only begotten Son, when he comes to judge the World. In ſhort,

ſhort, this ſeems to be an expreſſion borrowed from the appearance of God at Mount * *Sinai*; whither all *Iſrael* being to be gathered together, they were ſummoned thither by Thunders and Lightnings and a thick Cloud, and *the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud*, which made all the people tremble, xix. *Exod.* 16. So that the meaning of the Apoſtle is, that our Lord ſhall come as the Great King of the World in a moſt venerable Majeſty; which ſhall make all Mankind ſtand in awe of him, and tremble before him, as the *Iſraelites* did at the Appearance of the Divine Majeſty on Mount *Sinai*. And a great deal more. For,

* So *Theophylact* and other *Greek* Interpreters.

4. When he appears, it will be, as I have intimated already, with innumerable glittering Troops of Angels (all clothed in very bright and ſhining Clouds) as his Guard or Retinue to attend upon him. So we are informed in ſeveral other places: *For the Son of Man* (ſaith our Lord himſelf, xvj. *Matth.* 27.) *ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his Angels, and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.* Which S^t *Luke* expreſſes thus more fully, ix. *Luk.* 26. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of*

my words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when He ſhall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels. Some of which glorious Creatures appeared to the Apoſtles and told them as much when they ſtood gazing after our Saviour, as He aſcended up into Heaven, i. *Act.* 11. *This ſame Jeſus,* ſay they, *which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen Him go into Heaven.* Now he went thither in a moſt illuſtrious manner, in the bright Clouds of Heaven, attended by the Celeſtial Miniſters; who came to conduct him into his Glory. For that is the meaning (it were eaſie to ſhew if this place were proper for it) of thoſe words a little before, *ver.* 9. *He was taken* (or lifted) *up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight.*

In brief, He will appear as *the Lord of Hoſts; i. e.* of all the Armies of Heaven, whether Archangels, or Angels, Thrones, or Dominions, or Powers, or whatſoever other name there is whereby they are called.

5. And then making the Air his Camp, where he will pitch his Royal Pavilion, a *great White, i. e.* moſt Royal and ſhining

ning *Throne* will be ſet for Him, (*Revel.* xx. 11.) and leſſer Seats, it is likely, for all thoſe whom He intends to honour at that Great Day, 1 *Cor.* vj. 2, 3.

6. After which He will ſend forth his voice, his mighty voice, or moſt powerful and irreſiſtible word of Command; the efficacy of which will be ſuch that it will raiſe the dead out of their Graves, and bring them before his Throne, or Judgment-Seat. So He himſelf tells us in v. *Joh.* 28, 29. *The hour is coming in which ALL that are in the Graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation.* Of which Authority and Power of his, He tells them (*ver.* 25.) they ſhould ſhortly have a proof: which was at the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, when He did but ſay with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth*, xj. Joh. 43. and immediately he that was dead (as it there follows, *v.* 44.) came forth, though bound hand and foot with Grave-clothes.

In as eaſie a manner will He at the laſt day raiſe up all mankind; who being then gathered before him, and ſtanding

at his Tribunal, ſhall be judged and ſentenced by him, to receive every one according as their works have been, *Rev.* xx. 12, 13. 2 *Cor.* v. 10.

Some indeed ſhall riſe before others, (as *S*t *Paul* informs us in that 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16.) but ſuch ſhall be the concluſion of this Glorious Appearance; which as far as the Holy Scriptures (our only Guide in thoſe matters) would direct me, I have briefly explained. For after he hath taken an exact ſurvey of mens actions, and made a juſt diſtinction of their perſons, in ſuch ſort as he himſelf hath told us, *Matth.* xxv. 31, 32, 33, *&c.* (where all belonging to this judgment is ſummed up) he will crown the fidelity of his obedient Diſciples: and returning back from the Air (whither they will be caught up in glorious Clouds to meet him) he will carry them along with him to his Heavenly Palace; *And ſo*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſhall we be ever with the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.

And who is there now that would not wiſh to behold him come in this Royal Majeſty; and put ſuch an happy end to all our labours and troubles here? What

ſoul

ſoul is there that can forbear to love and earneſtly deſire this glorious ſight, if it hope to reap advantage by it? This is that on which all good Chriſtians ſhould ſet their hearts. This they ſhould wait and long for, as the moſt lovely ſpectacle, that can bleſs their eyes, whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe God to let it appear. They may be tempted rather to be impatient, becauſe it is ſo long deferred; than to be cold in their affection towards it, or indifferent whether it come or no. Nothing can hinder it from raiſing the moſt ardent deſires to enjoy it, unleſs any doubt creep into our hearts, whether there will be ſuch a time as I have deſcribed. That diſtruſt indeed, if we have any, muſt firſt be removed. We ought to look after a good aſſurance of the certainty of that, which we make the object of our love, and moſt paſſionate expectations.

For if we expect a SHOW, that is only painted in our own fancies, in curious colours, but hath no real exiſtence any where elſe, what an amazing diſappointment will it be to find we have ſet our hearts on that which is not, and have embraced a Cloud inſtead of God? How miſerable

miſerable ſhould we feel our ſelves, if at laſt we perceived that we had preſſed a dream, and with long out-ſtretched arms (as I may ſpeak) moſt ardently claſpt about a ſhadow? Into what a gulph of ſhame ſhould we tumble, if we ſaw in the concluſion and iſſue of things, the whole weight of our ſouls and moſt hearty affections fall upon the thin Air, and have nothing to ſupport them? Nothing can expreſs the confuſion it would throw us into, to find that we had courted, ſo many years or ages perhaps, a meer viſion of our own hearts; and let our affection looſe to wander in the Paradiſe of Fools.

That we may be out of fear therefore of any ſuch diſappointment; and have our affections powerfully excited towards ſo great a good, and be engaged moſt earneſtly to purſue it; I ſhall proceed to the *ſecond part* of this Diſcourſe, which is to ſhew the grounds we have to expect the APPEARING of the Lord Jeſus the ſecond time unto our eternal Salvation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The certainty of this APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

TO prove that there will certainly be ſuch an APPEARING of our Lord, as will ſurpaſs even the Glory wherein the Apoſtles ſaw him on the Holy Mount (which S^t *Luke* plainly ſhews was a figure of it, ix. *Luk.* 26, 27, 28.) I might alledge all thoſe Arguments which aſſure us there will be a Day wherein God will judge the World in righteouſneſs; and that the Lord Jeſus is ordained to be the Perſon by whom he will judge it. Which is as much as to ſay, that all thoſe Arguments which prove him to be *the Son of God*, might be employed to this purpoſe; for in that Name is included (as I have ſhewn in former Treatiſes) His power and authority to be the Judge of the World. This the *Father*, the *Word*, the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the other WITNESSES on Earth, as well as thoſe in Heaven, teſtifie to be an undoubted

undoubted Truth; and therefore I might from every one of their mouths demonſtrate, that He ſhall appear again in ſuch a manner as I have deſcribed. For all Judges, much more the Supreme Judge of all, ever aſcend their Tribunals in Robes of State, and royally attended; as thoſe that repreſent the Majeſty for whom they judge.

But it would be too tedious to follow that Method, and it is not needful I ſhould lead you ſo far about to bring you and this Truth together. There is one place in the Writings of the Apoſtle S^t *Paul*, which, if well expounded and underſtood, will be ſufficient to perſwade us, we do not abuſe our ſelves with vain expectations of this *Appearing*. And therefore with the explication of that (which contains divers Arguments to eſtabliſh us in this belief) I ſhall content my ſelf, without having recourſe to every one of thoſe WITNESSES. And I ſhall the rather confine my ſelf to it, becauſe I ſhall illuſtrate a very conſiderable portion of God's Holy Book (which upon all occaſions we ought to deſign to make perſpicuous) while I endeavour to give ſatisfactory Reaſons, that our Lord Jeſus

Jeſus will appear again, and in ſo glorious a manner as hath been related.

It is in his former Epiſtle to this very Perſon, his beloved Son *Timothy*, Chap. vj. where he charges him (*v.* 13, 14.) to keep the Commandment he had given him without the leaſt violation of it, *until the APPEARING of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* That is, till his coming from Heaven, with all the glorious train of Angels to recompenſe men according to their works. Now that *Timothy* might be fully perſwaded there would be ſuch a bleſſed time, and to be more ready and cheerful in his obedience to this exhortation, the Apoſtle aſſures him that this is no ſuch ſpectacle as is formed meerly in the imagination: but which God the Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth will really exhibit in his time, So the words are (*v.* 15, 16.) *Which* (Appearing) *in his times He ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee.*

Where we are firſt to obſerve well thoſe words which begin this deſcription of

of Him who will ſhew our Lord Chriſt in ſuch excellent Glory ἰδίοις καιροῖς, *in his times* (we render it) or rather *in the proper ſeaſons* for it. That is, in the time or ſeaſon which God in his unſearchable Wiſdom hath appointed. From which Phraſe *three* things offer themſelves to our conſideration.

Firſt, That the time, indeed, of this APPEARING is not revealed and made known to us. We muſt be content to be ignorant of it; for it is kept as a Secret in his own breaſt, and it becomes not us to determine the Seaſon which he hath reſerved to himſelf. Some Great Men, it is true, have adventured upon it; and S^t *Hilary**, for inſtance, hath delivered his Opinion, that the Tranſfiguration of our Lord, *Six days after he had ſpoken of his coming in his Kingdom* (xvij. Matth. 1.) prefigured the *Honour of the Celeſtial Kingdom* (as his words are) after the World had continued ſix thouſand years. But this and the current fancy among many in ancient times, that becauſe the World was ſix days in making, it ſhould laſt juſt ſix thouſand years, had no better foundation than thoſe miſapplied words of S^t *Peter*, 2 iij. 8. *That one day*

* Canon xvij. in *Matth.*

with the Lord is as a thousand years. And therefore it is deservedly censured by S^t *Augustine* (upon xc. *Psal.* 4.) as a presumption reprehended by our Lord himself, when he told his Apostles, (i. *Act.* 7.) *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* And yet there have been those who would needs be meddling and conclude this from no better reason than the Translation of *Enoch*, who was the seventh from *Adam*. And there is one of great note in these later times (to name no more) who hath been so bold as from a slighter ground to conjecture the time of the Coming of our Lord. Who having said in iv. *Luke* 19. that according to *Isaiah*'s Prophecy he was come *to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, or to proclaim a *Jubilee* to the World, *Cusanus* thence concluded that for every year of our Saviours life, the Church should continue a Jubilee, that is fifty years. And therefore he rising again in the 34^th year of his Age, the Church should have its blessed Resurrection when the 34^th Jubilee was past: That is, after the year 1700. before the year 1734. which he endeavours to make more probable from

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the ſimilitude of the flood, which our Saviour, he obſerves, uſes when he ſpeaks of his coming: Fanſying that as from the firſt *Adam* to the deſtruction of the World by water, there paſſed according to *Philo* juſt 34. Jubilees; ſo there ſhall be the like number of years from the ſecond *Adam* to the conſumption of it by fire. There are ſeveral other little fancies whereby he ſtudies to ſtrengthen this conceit: But I ſhall not mention them, becauſe as S^t *Auſtin* hath rightly pronounced again in another place, from that Saying of our Saviour before-mentioned, it is better to profeſs our Ignorance, than to profeſs a falſe knowledge. And this we have reaſon to think is no better, becauſe ſuch ſupputations of the times, as he ſpeaks, that we may know when will be the end of the World, and the coming of the Lord, ſeem to be nothing elſe but a deſire to know that which he himſelf hath ſaid, the Father hath reſerved only to himſelf. Which words our Saviour did not ſpeak, becauſe he was ignorant of the time about which the Apoſtles enquired, but (as *Oecumenius* well notes) becauſe it would contribute nothing to their ſalvation to be acquainted

Epiſt. LXXVIII

quainted with it. And it is the office of an excellent Master to teach, μὴ ἃ βέλονται οἱ μαθηταὶ, &c. not what the Scholars desire, but what it is profitable for them to learn. This was the only reason he denied to satisfie them; for he himself knew very well the times and seasons, as the same Writer adds, because, *All that the Father hath is the Sons also.* Now,

We are to consider (in the *second* place) that God the Father hath determined and set down a time for this *appearing* of his Son Jesus, though he hath not thought fit to have us acquainted with it. It is not the less certain, because he hath not revealed when it will be: since he hath fore-appointed in his own secret counsel, a season proper for this business. This ought to give no small strength to our Faith and Hope; for we are wont always to make the surer account of a thing, and look for it the more confidently; when we know there is a time limited and prefixed for its performance.

The Apostle indeed supposes (which is the *third* thing) that many Ages might pass before this appointed time arrived; but yet it will not fail to come at last.

* καιροῖς, times.

The Phraſe being in the Plural Number *, ſeems naturally to denote a long time hence. And if we obſerve the uſe of the very ſame Phraſe in another place of this Epiſtle, *Chap.* ij. *v.* 6. (where he ſaith our Saviour gave himſelf a ranſome for all; a teſtimony καιροῖς ἰδίοις, *in due ſeaſon*, as we there tranſlate it) we cannot well allow it any other meaning in this. For there it ſignifies that our Lord at laſt did give a moſt memorable teſtimony of the exceeding great Grace of God, though ſeveral Ages were paſſed by (ſince the firſt promiſe made of his coming) before he appeared in fleſh to dye for us: And therefore here in all reaſon it muſt be conceived to denote the revolution of ſeveral Ages more, from that firſt Coming of his till the ſecond Appearing in aſtoniſhing Glory; as *Oecumenius* juſtly calls it.

How many Ages we cannot tell; and ſome of thoſe who thought heretofore they could tell, committed ſo groſs an error in their account, that it hath taught Poſterity to be more cautious in determining any thing about it. They, I mean, who fanſied the World ſhould continue juſt ſix thouſand years, following the Com-

Computation of the *Greek* Translators of the Bible, brought this Period to an end many Ages ago. *Lactantius*, for instance, tells us (and it is above thirteen hundred years since he died) that *post breve tempus* *, after a short time they expected the conclusion of all things. And although they varied in their account, and could not agree in the exact summe of the years that were still to come, yet *Omnis expectatio non amplius quàm ducentorum videtur annorum* *, in this they seemed all to consent that they would not exceed two hundred years. But S^t *Ambrose* lived to confute these conjectures; and saith that according to his reckoning this period of six thousand years was out in his days. And should we follow the Computation of the *Hebrews*, perhaps we should not come nearer to the mark if we still depended on such expectations: but after these six thousand years are indeed expired, there may be a great number for any thing we know still to come before the end of all things. Which notwithstanding should be no discouragement to us, as long as it is sure and certain He will come: the time being set, and He who hath prefix-

* L. VII. Divin. Instit. C. 14.

* Ib. Cap. 25.

ed it being so qualified, that no doubt He will shew our Saviour in all his Glory, ἐν τοῖς προσήκουσι, τοῖς ἀφωρισμένοις καιροῖς *, in the most convenient and peculiar season, which is set apart and destin'd for it. For as there was a fulness of time (iv. *Gal.* 4.) when it was resolved our Saviour should first appear, after they had waited many Ages for him: so there is, no doubt, the like time set for his last appearing, and the consummation of all things; though it may be long before it be fulfilled. He who so faithfully performed His promise of the one, will never fail us in the other; because He remains the same Almighty and Unchangeable Lord and Governour of all things; whose will none can resist, and whose purpose none can frustrate or divert, but it shall certainly ἐν καιροῖς ὀφειλομένοις, (as S^t *Chrysostome* expounds it) in due season take effect.

* *Theophylact* and *Oecumenius.*

And that is the chief thing I intend here to note; the description of the Person, who will exhibit and shew Christ Jesus again to the World in the most magnificent Glory; *viz.* God the Father Almighty. *Six* of whose Attributes or Properties are here mentioned by the Apostle

Apoſtle to confirm this Faith in *Timothy*, and to work it in us; that He will not fail in his times to bring our Saviour again out of his holy place, and make Him appear in ſuch a manner as they preached.

The grounds of their preaching it was that (firſt of all) our Saviour had made them a ſolemn promiſe before He left them, that He would return and take them up to the ſame place whither He was going, xiv. *Joh.* 2, 3. *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, there you may be alſo.* And (2.) the Holy Angels likewiſe had added their Teſtimony ſince He went to Heaven, to the truth of this promiſe. For as they were looking after Him when they ſaw Him aſcend, two of them ſtood by them and ſaid, *This ſame Jeſus which you ſaw taken up into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him going into Heaven*, i. *Act.* 11. And (3.) after this the Holy Ghoſt came, which was the fulfilling of a promiſe ſomething like to this, xvi. *Joh.* 16. *A little while and ye ſhall ſee me, and again a little while and ye ſhall*

not see me, because I go to my Father. This was the Deputy of our Saviour (as *Tertullian* speaks) and the testimony of his Presence; by whom he visited them, and came again to see them (*v.* 22.) according to his word: And the other promises they concluded would be as certainly made good as this was. But (lastly) S^t *Paul* had a greater reason still to preach this, because he had received an express warrant and command from our Lord Christ himself, since He went to the Throne of his Glory, to declare that He would come again in all that pomp and Royal Majesty which the Apostle describes in 1 *Thess.* iv. 16, 17. For what he there delivers about this matter, He assures the *Thessalonians* was ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου, *by the word of the Lord.* Other things (as *Theophylact* notes) he spake by the Holy Ghost, but this he learnt from Christ Himself, and heard from his own mouth. Either when our Lord first appeared to him and gave him a Commission to preach what he had seen; or at some other time when He further *appeared unto him,* (xxvi. *Act.* 16, 17, *&c.*) or else, as *Oecumenius* * conjectures, when he was caught up into the third Heaven, and into

* Ἴσως ἡ αὐτὸ ἐν ᾧ ἦν ἁρπαγῶν, &c.

into Paradise; where he heard many things which he was not permitted, or could not utter; though thus far he was able to inform us, that the glory wherein our Lord reigned would one day be visibly revealed.

Now see upon what solid reasons and sure foundations the Apostle perswades *Timothy* to believe that God the Father will perform this promise of our Lord and Saviour; whom it is apparent He sent, and hath therefore highly exalted, because he never said nor did any thing but what He commanded Him.

I. First, He tells him that there will no doubt be such a glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He who will shew him in his splendor is ὁ Μακάριος, The *BLESSED One*. As much as to say, so full a Good, that He wants nothing at all to complete and perfect his Happiness. And therefore (1.) cannot be tempted out of any envy (with which none but penurious Beings are capable to be infected) to deny us this exceeding great favour. But rather (2.) will be moved by his plenitude and his bountiful nature to communicate it to us, according to our

Saviour's promiſe. Eſpecially (3.) ſince He hath already advanced him to the higheſt bliſs and happineſs; and can ſo eaſily without any damage to himſelf, make all others bleſſed, who are faithful to him. And (4.) is unchangeable alſo (which *Theodoret* * thinks is included in this word) both in his nature and in his purpoſe; becauſe being moſt bleſſed in himſelf, He cannot alter for any thing that is better.

* Τὸ ἀτρεπτον ἐδήλωσεν μακάριον ὀνομάσας, &c.

They that have but a little may be loth to give; and they who have any defect may be unwilling that any ſhould approach too nigh their Greatneſs: For wanting ſomething themſelves they may be beſt pleaſed when they ſee that others do ſo too; and they may find that convenience in breaking, which they could not have done in keeping their word. But he that wants nothing, nor is liable to any diminution of what he hath (being in full perfect poſſeſſion of all happineſs, pleaſure and bliſs) can never be unwilling to impart good things to others; nor deſirous they ſhould be leſs happy, than their natures are capable to be; nor tempted to go back with his word, when he hath engaged himſelf to do them good.

good. No, rather quite contrary; He takes a pleasure in filling others out of his exuberant Goodness, and cannot be inclined to be more forward to make very gracious Promises than he is to make them good to those who patiently expect the performance.

Thus we cannot but believe when we reflect upon his Blessedness. Especially when we consider withal that he is μόνος Δυνάστης, (which is the second thing.)

II. *The only* POTENTATE. This signifies His absolute Power, as the other did his Good-will, to make such a publick show of Jesus Christ, attended with the Pomp of all the Heavenly Host, to judge the World. Which Power of his, is denoted by that word [*only*] to be independent, originally inherent in himself, and not derived from any other: for which cause there can be no defect in it, nor can it ever grow less than it is.

There are several other *Potentates*, it's true, both in Heaven and in Earth; but whatsoever Power, Might, or Authority there is in them, it is derived intirely from him, as the source and fountain of it. They have nothing but what springs out of him, and holds of him; who the

Apostle

Apoſtle therefore pronounces hath the Empire or ſupreme Authority over the World *alone* to himſelf; becauſe whatſoever others have, it is not natural but arbitrary and at pleaſure; his eſſential and of himſelf. It hath no higher cauſe, and therefore is inſeparable from him; and can never be either wholly deſtroyed, or in the leaſt impair'd and weakned. No, He continues always as He ever was, the Rock of our ſtrength, and of our Salvation: (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, lxij. *Pſal.*) on whom our Souls may build a moſt ſure hope; which ſtands on ſuch a bottom as no power whatſoever can ſhake. For He being ſo very great, ſo abſolute a *Potentate*, there wants nothing but his own will to the effecting any thing (even ſo great a thing as this, *the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt,*) and of that we are ſecured by the foregoing conſideration, that He is the *BLESSED.*

III. To which the Apoſtle further adds that He is *KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS*; whereby we are to underſtand the Dominion, which by His ſupreme Power and Authority He exerciſes over the whole World, over Angels of higheſt degree, and Men of greateſt

greateſt rank, as well as over other inferior Creatures. They are all ſo much below him, and ſo perfectly ſubject to his pleaſure, that the ſtrongeſt and moſt mighty Oppoſers that can be imagined, have no power to do any thing to hinder this glorious appearance. A force like that of the *Perſian*, *Aſſyrian*, and *Egyptian* Kings, (who were all wont to ſpeak in this lofty ſtyle) is not ſo conſiderable to him as ſo many flies would be to them: No, nor if we ſhould ſuppoſe a power that could claim a juſt title to the Government of the Univerſe; would it be able to withſtand the will of him to whom alone this great Name of *KING of KINGS* doth properly appertain. Nay more than this, ſhould all the Hoſts of Heaven combine together in a confederacy to join with all the forces on Earth, aſſembled in one Body under their ſeveral Princes and Chieftains, they could not by all their reſiſtance defeat his Decree which he hath paſſed for the Coming of our Lord.

And yet we are not to make any ſuch ſuppoſal, becauſe they all obey his Commandment, and are obedient to the voice of his Word. And as for thoſe Creatures (be they never ſuch Principalities and

Powers

Powers in high places, vi. *Epheſ.* 12.) which will not now obey Him, they ſhall not be able at that time to gain-ſay his Soveraign Will: But they ſhall attend, whether they will or no, upon this Royal Perſon, Chriſt Jeſus. The good Angels, thoſe Celeſtial *Lords*, (whether Thrones or Dominions, or whatever other name of Authority there is above) and all inferiour Governours, the Gods upon Earth, (Emperors, Kings, Princes, and Judges of the World) together with thoſe evil Angels who are called *the Rulers of the darkneſs of this World*; they ſhall all appear either with or before our Saviour; according as the GREAT KING ſhall appoint, who hath promiſed to ſhow him; for He is the ſupreme Lord and Ruler of them all.

IV. And ſuch a ſupereminent King (as the Apoſtle goes on) is He who ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY: *i. e.* lives for ever to make good what He hath promiſed, which cannot be ſaid of any but of himſelf. Earthly Kings are as weak and mortal as their Subjects: And ſo all their promiſes (though they intend never ſo ſeriouſly to perform them, and have power for the preſent to do it) may fail

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and come to nought, because they themselves may fail and return unto their dust. And *in that very day*, saith the Psalmist, cxlvi. 4. *their thoughts perish*; that is, all their designs, counsels and purposes, with all the promises and great hopes that depend upon them, dye together with those that made them. But that Great King, the Lord of Lords, who hath immortality, and who *only* hath it; that is, of Himself, and not from any ones gift and favour (being the Lord, as I said, of Angels as well as of our Spirits, which οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀθανασίαν, ἀλλὰ μετέχουσιν αὐτῆς, &c. have not Immortality, but partake of it, by the Grace of Him who alone by nature is immortal *) He, I say, may be confided in and relied upon: Because, He neither wanting power, nor being subject to death or alteration, none of his counsels and purposes can be defeated. No promise of his can fall to the ground in process of time; because He lives then in all succeeding Ages, as much as He did at that moment when He passed it.

* *Theophylact* and *Oecumenius.*

And besides this, it is very considerable, that having Immortality of Himself, (which the Apostle means, as I noted just now, when He saith He only hath it) He can grant this benefit to us, even to our Bodies,

Bodies, as he hath done to the Angels, and to our Blessed Lord and Saviour. Who saith concerning himself, i. *Rev.* 18. *I am he that liveth and was dead* (*i. e.* am alive from the dead) *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*; (*i. e.* there is nothing more certain) *and have the keys of hell and of death.* Power, that is, to open the Graves of others, and promote them to Immortality with my self.

And there is no reason to fear left our Saviour should not come and appear to do this; though it may be a great way off, and many Centuries of years have passed since He gave us his word for it: Because God the Father Almighty, the blessed and only Potentate, who authorized Him to make this Promise, and hath since that raised him from the dead, is immortal, and hath an indefectible life in himself, of his own nature. His will, as I have said, doth not alter, and his power cannot be impaired, or suffer any decay; and therefore He can and will continue and perpetuate the Kingdom He hath given to our blessed Mediator Christ Jesus; and keep him in full power and authority till that Great Day: And when the fulness of time is come, bring

bring Him again upon the Stage of the World (if I may so speak) and shew Him openly as the great Lord of all; whom He hath honoured already with his own high Title of KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS, xix. *Revel.* 16. All this is as easie for Him to do, as it was at first to raise him out of his Grave, and then advance him to the Throne of his Glory; where he now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And there is the greater reason to believe that He will both perpetuate the Kingdom of Christ to the Worlds end, and conclude it with the glorious exaltation of all his Subjects, when he shall appear again; (it being no more difficult than it was to carry him to Heaven) because as the Apostle further notes:

V. HE DWELLS IN LIGHT INACCESSIBLE; which no man, that is, can enter into, or approach. This signifies the inconceiveable brightness of the Divine Majesty; both as to His Essence, which cannot by us be comprehended; and as to the place where He more eminently manifests Himself in an amazing splendor. He is the Great King who lives above in the highest Heavens, as in His Palace;

Palace; where he repreſents Himſelf in a Glory ſo ſhining and dazling (called in Scripture his *Majeſty*) that it is not for ſuch as we (till there be a marvellous change wrought in us) to come nigh it.

Nor is it ſo beſeeming that He ſhould deſcend Himſelf from thence in that moſt Glorious MAJESTY to judg the World, and to transform all thoſe who ſhall be *accounted worthy to obtain that better World, and the reſurrection from the dead.* And therefore we may be confident our Bleſſed Saviour, who long ago was ordained to be the perſon, will, according to his Word, come as his Commiſſioner to do it in his ſtead. It is not ſo agreeable to his State and Greatneſs (if I may ſo expreſs it) to come Himſelf out of His Orb of Light to fetch us to his houſe and dwelling-place: But ſince He hath appointed a day of recompences, we may be ſure He will ſend his Son in *the glory of the Father*, as he tells us, ix. *Luk.* 26. (that is, in a *Majeſty* like that I now ſpake of) *and in the glory of his holy Angels*, (who uſe to attend him) to meet us and conduct us ſafely thither.

Or we may conceive of this expreſſion, after this manner: GOD (the Father, that

that is, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt) is in that high and holy place, the Sanctuary above; into which no man hath yet entred, ſave only the great High-Prieſt of our Salvation, the Lord Jeſus. And yet GOD hath made us a promiſe by him, before he went to heaven, that we alſo ſhall live with Him, and be there where He is. From whence we may conclude, that this great High-Prieſt will certainly come in his Royal Majeſty, out of that place into which He is gone; *to bleſs us*, by bringing us to that Region of Light and Glory, which He himſelf only as yet inherits; and which is not any way acceſſible, but only by his means. In whoſe power, we may be ſatisfied, it is to promote us thither, being in ſuch favour with the Divine Majeſty, and ſitting at His right hand; who *inhabits*, or poſſeſſes this glorious place, as His own proper *Dwelling*, and therefore can diſpoſe of a Manſion in it, to whom He pleaſes.

VI. And indeed the Apoſtle bids us remember, (which is the laſt thing) that *no man hath SEEN GOD, nor CAN SEE HIM*; is capable, that is, to be in his glorious Preſence. Which ſignifies partly the ſame with the former; and alſo may

ſuggeſt among other things the faithfulneſs of Him, who hath promiſed to ſhew us this Appearing of Chriſt Jeſus; of GOD, that is, the Father Almighty, who we ſee here plainly is the perſon of whom the Apoſtle hath, all this time been ſpeaking (as St. *Ambroſe* and St. *Chryſoſtome* alſo, if his gloſs be well weighed, underſtand him) not of our Saviour: who hath been ſeen already and ſhall be ſeen again at his ſecond appearing. And you know, He hath promiſed to the *pure in heart* that they *ſhall SEE GOD*, v. *Matt.* 8. A favour which in this ſtate no man hath enjoyed or can enjoy, as St. *Paul* here tells us. It is not for ſuch as we to *ſee God*; and therefore there muſt be a time, when, according to his faithful promiſe, Chriſt Jeſus ſhall appear again; to change us, and put us in ſuch a condition, that He may bring us to that ſight of Him, which no man in this World can have.

Either we muſt remain for ever without the ſight of Him; (and then God would not be true, who hath ſaid by His Son that we ſhall ſee him) or we muſt be carried up from hence unto His heavenly Palace; and then our Lord muſt

must appear to fit us for it, and make us capable of such a blessedness, and to transport us thither.

For how should we otherways be conveyed to a place so much above us, but by the coming of our Lord, to lift us up, and promote us to it, we cannot understand: Since this is the way that He hath described; and our Lord Jesus is to have the honour of doing all the good to his faithful Servants, which GOD in his infinite Goodness designs to bestow upon them.

This I take to be intimated in these words [*Whom no man hath seen, nor can see*] which declare still more fully than was said before, the super-eminent excellence and perfection of the Divine Nature, and the astonishing brightness of his Majesty. Which, whilst we are here, we cannot reach, or attain any considerable sight of; and therefore Christ Jesus, who hath promised we shall see Him, will appear again to fit us for conversation with Him.

And indeed, since God hath already fulfilled his promise of the first appearance of His Son; and sent Him, born of a Woman, to bring the glad tydings of

Salvation to us (by which he did, in one ſenſe, make us *ſee God*; that is, underſtand His Mind, Counſels and Will, i. *Joh.* 18.) and ſince another promiſe likewiſe of his coming to deſtroy his Crucifiers (when *every eye*, he ſaith, *ſhould ſee him*, i. *Rev.* 8. that is, his Power and Glory at God's right hand, ſhould be abundantly thereby manifeſted to the World) is punctually and exactly made good: What reaſon have we to doubt of the certainty of his other appearing, which is ſtill behind; when we ſhall behold him perſonally preſent with us, to bring us nearer into the very preſence of God?

We have the ſame word paſſed for it, which they had for the other: he hath the ſame Will, the ſame Power, the ſame Empire and Soveraign Dominion; And therefore why ſhould we not have the ſame confidence, and expect it with as much and full aſſurance, as Holy men in old times waited for the firſt Conſolation of *Iſrael*, or pious Chriſtians waited for deliverance from their Adverſaries?

There is ſo little cauſe that our Faith ſhould think it ſelf leſs aſſured than theirs, that we may rather look for this

ſecond

second appearing of our Lord and Saviour, with much greater confidence than they could do for the first: Because we have the advantage of seeing all those old Prophecies which foretold his Manifestation in our flesh, actually fulfilled; and the Lord hath shown since that, *how upright He is, and that there is no unrighteousness in Him.* We may depend not only (as the Apostle hath here told us) upon His Goodness and perfect Happiness, upon his Power, upon his absolute Dominion over all Creatures whatsoever, upon his Immortality, upon his transcendent Glory and Majesty, and upon his Faithfulness and Truth: but I may add, upon the evident Demonstrations he hath already given in the most remarkable instances, that *His Mercies are sure*; and that he *keepeth Truth for ever*, xiii. Acts 34. cxlvi. Psal. 6.

For this Blessed and only Potentate, this King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, *hath done great things for us already, whereof we are glad.* He hath sent his Son after good men had long expected Him;

He ſent Him to do for them more than they expected (1 *Cor.* ij. 9.) He raiſed him up out of his Grave, and made him Lord of all; He hath given him power to raiſe up us to eternal life (as appears by the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which wrought in his Apoſtles, and enabled them to raiſe the dead, and do many other wonders;) *His Judgments alſo have already been made manifeſt*; He hath in part avenged the blood of his Servants, and the *Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt.* And therefore we may with a ſtedfaſt Faith look for another appearing of our Saviour, when he will come in perſon to exerciſe this power himſelf (wherewith we ſee he is inveſted) ſo far, as to *change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body* (which then he will ſhow to the World) *according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf*, iij. Phil. 20, 21.

Revel. vi. 10. xi. 15. xv. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Containing the Use we should make of what hath been delivered in the foregoing Chapter.

I Cannot think fit to pass on to what I further intend, without some short Reflection upon so weighty a Subject as this of which I have been treating. And therefore let us here pause a while, and consider how mightily All this should move us to worship and adore this Blessed Potentate God the Father Almighty; to acknowledge with the humblest submission, His Supreme Authority; to reverence, admire, and praise His most glorious Perfections, who hath given us such a sure ground of faith and hope in Him. For so S^t *Paul* here concludes this incomparable description of him— *to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Which is not said to exclude the other two Persons in the holy and undivided Trinity, from receiving our Worship

and Service (no more than the giving eternal Glory to our Saviour in the next Epiſtle, 2 *Tim.* iv. 18. and in other places, takes it away from the Father) but only to remember us of a peculiar Prerogative, which the Holy Scripture alway aſcribes to the Father Almighty, of being the Fountain and Beginning of all *; to whom it properly and peculiarly belongs to ſhow this appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore the Apoſtle invites us, from the conſideration of His moſt excellent Majeſty and abſolute Dominion, to acknowledge and confeſs Him, to acknowledge and praiſe Him; *Firſt*, As worthy of all HONOUR, Worſhip, Veneration and Service. Becauſe (*Secondly*) He hath all POWER and Authority over us, and over all Creatures; an independent uncontroulable Power. And that (*Thirdly*) EVERLASTINGLY to be celebrated, not only by us, but by all that ſhall come after us to the World's end. Nay, to be praiſed and magnified by Saints and Angels in Heaven to Eternal Ages.

To this we ſhould every one of us together with the Apoſtle, moſt heartily ſay AMEN: Let be ſo. We give our conſent

* So *Epiphanius* obſerves, that the Scripture ſhows, μίαν εἶναι τὴν πηγὴν τῆς πάντων ἀγαθῶν, τυτέστι τὸν Πατέρα. καθάπερ ἡ πηγὴς μία ἐκ πηγῆς ὁ υἱὸς, &c. Hæreſ. LXIX. Num. 54. and *Nazianz.* Orat. xxix. p. 489, &c.

consent unfeignedly to it; and wish from the bottom of our Souls, that all men would honour and submit unto this *blessed* and only *Potentate*, the *King of kings, and the Lord of lords.* What though No man ever saw him? Nay, what though No man can see Him? Yet Glory, Honour and Power is to be ascribed to Him, because we see his Works of Wonder every where. The Heavens and the Earth declare the Greatness of his Glory; and from all things that we behold, we learn his rich Goodness, his infinite Power, his immortal Bliss; and that He is such a Potentate, as the greatest Kings and Princes upon Earth, nay the highest Thrones and Principalities in Heaven, ought to worship and obey with the greatest reverence. And much more is this due from us, poor and inferior Creatures: especially since He hath shown Himself so gracious to us in our Saviour (the most excellent demonstration of his blessed Nature and mighty Love) and hath promised He shall appear once more in greater Glory than ever; and hath taught us to believe, by all the Notions we have of Him, that He will never fail to make that promise good.

And

And as we ought to Honour God the Father of all; ſo this naturally moves us (out of a particular obligation) to honour and obey our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the Perſon whom this Great Majeſty will ſhow in wonderful honour and glory at the Great Day.

This is the very reaſon (you muſt mark) wherewith the Apoſtle backs his Charge to *Timothy* to keep the Commandment he gave him, *without ſpot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, v. 14. becauſe the bleſſed and only Potentate will certainly, in his own time, ſhew the glory wherein he lives, by his appearing again in Royal Majeſty in the ſight of all the World. It concerns us therefore, as well as it did *Timothy*, to have an exceeding great regard to this moſt glorious Perſon, whom God will ſo highly honour; and to take care that we behave our ſelves ſo, as to be unreproveable at that day. We muſt obſerve His Commandments, that is, as exactly as we can; and endeavour to render our ſelves as a beautiful body, without any ſpot and blemiſh; and thereby be found acceptable in His ſight, at his appearing.

And if you would know what Commandments

mandments they were which He would have *Timothy*, in consideration of this appearing of Christ, and the certainty thereof; to keep without spot; you need but look back to the *eleventh* and *twelfth* Verses, and there you may find them. *Follow after righteousness; godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called*, &c. "That is, shun Covetousness, and all "the vices that issue from it, ever ren- "dring to every man what is his due: "Have God always before thine eyes, "and put thy trust and confidence in "him; Deceive no man that relies on "thy word; exercise mercy and charity "to all; suffer wrongs rather than do "them; and suffer them with a patient "humble mind; bridle anger, repress all "Cholerick motions; and use such gen- "tleness to others, as thou wouldst de- "sire thy self in the like cases. And for "this end I contend earnestly for the Chri- "stian faith; that is, suffer not thy faith "in Christ to be shaken, much less over- "thrown by any persecution, pain, or "death it self. As thou hast begun to "show thy self a good Christian, so con- "tinue.

"tinue. Remember thy Calling and "Profeſſion; and reſolve to quit all thou "haſt, rather than fall ſhort of Eternal "Life. And this I give thee in charge "(*ver.* 13.) as thou wilt anſwer it be- "fore God, who raiſes even the dead; "and before our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who "conſtantly profeſſed the truth before "*Pontius Pilate*; that thou keep theſe "things inviolable, and endeavour to be "found pure and holy when Chriſt ſhall "appear again: As certainly He will; "for we have his word for it, and God "the bleſſed and only Potentate, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords, *&c.* "is able, and lives for ever to make it "good.

Theſe two Uſes, you ſee, the Apoſtle plainly directs us to make of the Doctrine here delivered. And there is a *Third*, which he teaches us in the place I am now treating of; when he deſcribes all good Chriſtians who *keep the Faith*, by the Name of thoſe who *LOVE this APPEARING* of Chriſt Jeſus.

All they who obſerve the Commandments of our Lord and Saviour with ſeriouſneſs and care, ought to ſet their

hearts

hearts upon this glorious appearing which they expect; as the most goodly sight, the most blessed spectacle that eyes can behold. This is the very Character, you see, that S^t *Paul* gives of the faithful; and so it hath ever since been esteemed by all those who understood our Religion. Which disposes and inclines all those that heartily embrace it, and live according to it, to have a great affection for that happy day, which so many pious souls, through so many Ages, have most passionately longed to see. So *Andreas Cæsariensis* hath most excellently expressed the sense of all right Christians, when he sets this down for the Contents of the last Chapter of the *Revelation* (according to the old Division *) ὅτι ἡ ἁγία Ἐκκλησία, καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ Πνεῦμα, &c. *How the Church, and that Spirit which is in it, wishes for and desires the glorious appearing of Christ.* Which will bring with it so transcendent a bliss, that they have little faith or little goodness, who do not only wait for it, but rejoyce in hope of it before it come. For when the Apostle calls this appearing of Christ his Revelation (saith an ancient Writer in *Oecumenius* *) δίδωσιν αὐτοῖς μέγιστα προσδοκᾶν,

* Chap. lxxii.

* In 2 *Thes.* i. 7.

δοκῶν, ἢ ἴδῃς, &c. *He bids them look for the greatest things, and please themselves in the very thoughts of his coming, before they receive the recompense of the reward.* For as his appearing will be infinitely affrighting to the wicked, and they have reason to dread it beforehand; so it will be no less comfortable to the godly, who ought now to entertain themselves with delightful hopes of it, and fetch great contentment and consolation from it; because they shall then see and hear such things as will ravish their hearts with joy unconceivable.

That's the chiefest thing of all, and which is principally by me intended in these Papers. Unto which therefore, without any further evidence that might be produced of the certainty of this appearing, I shall apply my self in the remaining *Third Part* of this Discourse.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the means to excite that LOVE *in our hearts, which we ought to have for Christs* APPEARING.

I Have passed over the other two with the greater speed, because I intend to take the more pains in this; by endeavouring to show, and to express as lively as I can, what the LOVE is which we should bear to this *Appearing*, if we hope to partake in the comforts of it. And how to do this better, than by describing the original and progress of this passion, I cannot devise. And therefore I shall use that Method for the conveying this Appearing of Christ into your minds under such a notion and character, as shall not fail to stir up in your heart the devoutest affection for it.

I.

Let it then in the first place be remembred, that there cannot be the least beginning

ginning of this love, unleſs we look upon the appearing of our Saviour as a GOOD, and that of the greateſt *Size*. For elſe it will be ſo far from touching us with any inclination towards it, that it will excite either our hatred, or our contempt of it. It is the *GOOD* which we diſcern in any thing, that charms our ſouls, and attracts our deſires. Though an object be never ſo near us, and preſent it ſelf to our very hands, and would thruſt it ſelf upon us; yet if we ſee no good in it, we either hate it for diſturbing our quiet, or at leaſt are perfectly cold to it, as feeling no power it hath to ſtir up any paſſion for it. Nay, though we do perceive a thing to be good for us, and deſirable to be enjoyed; yet if it ſtand at ſuch a great diſtance, and ſeem ſo very far off, as the *Appearing* of Jeſus Chriſt for any thing we know may be, it will not ſenſibly affect our hearts; nor move us to bear much regard to it, unleſs it have the face of a very great happineſs, and promiſe us exceeding much contentment.

This *Appearing* therefore of our Lord, is called by this Apoſtle in another place, ii. *Tit.* 13. *that* BLESSED HOPE; to expreſs

expreſs the incomparable happineſs and bliſs, which it will bring along with it. He would have us look upon it as a thing that far more imports us, than all our preſent enjoyments, or all that is poſſible to be here enjoyed. For there is nothing in this World that is worthy to be ſpoken of with ſuch an Emphaſis, as to be called *that bleſſed thing*, that happy poſſeſſion. This is a peculiar reſpect, belonging only to the appearing of Chriſt, which is the ſumm of all a Chriſtians Hopes; and thoſe Hopes the great treaſure of his ſoul.

When we ſo eſteem it and look upon it with ſuch a regard, as it is preſented to us in the Glaſs of God's Word; immediately we ſhall feel our hearts begin to draw towards it. This is the firſt buſineſs of a devout Chriſtian, who would *love* the appearing of his Saviour, to perſwade his heart to have a reſpect to it, far above all other things. That bleſſed day, all pious hearts, who have any hope of his favour, ſhould think of and look for as the brighteſt that ever ſhone. The Coronation of a King, the Triumph of a Conquerour, the publick applauſe in the *Olympick* Games, the moſt famous Shows

that have ever been, or can be made, are all (they must remember) but as so many little Puppet-plays, in comparison with that grand Spectacle. When all the World shall be in a gaze, when Angels as well as men shall wonder and admire; when the Sun shall blush to see it self out-shone and overcome in brightness; when the Hosts of blessed Spirits shall be the only Stars, and our great Lord the only Sun that appears in the Firmament; when the righteous themselves shall shine in the same splendor, by the reflection of his Rays upon them.

Thus we must discourse with our selves continually, if we would be sensible of our happiness (as S^t *Chrysostome* * advises those who would understand their high birth and nobility) "We must look "unto Heaven, to the very Throne, the "Royal Throne, for there sits, says He, "the First-fruit of mankind. Who will "come again, will certainly come again, "leading all his Hosts along with Him: "the Legions of Angels, the several "Squadrons of Arch-Angels, the Societies of the Martyrs, the Quires of the "Righteous, the Tribes of the Prophets "and Apostles; and in the midst of these "immaterial

* Tom. V. Orat. 1. in Pentecost. p. 608.

"immaterial Camps, the King Himself "will appear ἀῤῥήτῳ τινὶ καὶ ἀφεάτῳ δόξῃ, "in a certain unutterable and inexpressi-"ble Glory.

O Dark House, or Cave of Earth (will every one who believes this heartily, be apt to say,) How willingly would I leave thee; if I might be transported to meet our blessed Lord thus Royally incamped in the Air! O poor World! How come I so far to value thee, as to suffer thee to captivate this heart? How glad should I rather be to see thee no more; if I might but behold him, whom my soul loveth, appear? Nay, it ought not to grieve me to see this Earth, and all things in it in a flame; if that Celestial Glory would but show it self. There is nothing here so dear, which I should not chuse to part withal most cheerfully for the sake of so great a Blessedness.

Come my Friends and my Relations (the dearest Goods in this World) let us set our hearts on this; and desire to meet together with our Lord. Let our hearts be united in this love, as much as they are in all things else. There is nothing we enjoy of such esteem, but we ought to be content to see it

vaniſh and diſappear before that illuſtrious ſight. Happy will that time be which ſhall eclipſe all that beauty, which now preſents it ſelf unto us, with ſo much addreſs. Bleſſed will be the day that ſhall put out the luſtre of the whole World; which now ſo ſtrangely dazzles our eyes. A great deal better will that moment be which ſhall diſſolve, if God think good, all our ſtately Palaces, than that which reared them and built them up.

Away, away, you trifling Vanities. Why do you thus bewitch our eyes and inchant our ears, and draw aſide our thoughts with your flattering inticements? Trouble us no more you falſe or unſatisfying glories. But leave our minds free to think of that great and ſolemn day, when you muſt all be benighted; not by the want, but by an exceſs of light and brightneſs.

Awake, awake, and open thine eyes upon us, O thou ſweet morning of our happineſs! Ariſe, ſhine forth, O thou Sun of Righteouſneſs, and make us bleſſed with a ſight of thy Glory! Nay, it would content us more, than if we had all the World; if we might but ſee the Clouds break; if we could but behold the ſhadows of the night beginning to haſte away; if thou, Lord, wouldſt but

diſſipate

diſſipate theſe dark vapours that now encompaſs us, and cauſe the light of Divine Faith, as the Day-ſtar to ſhine continually in our hearts.

II.

But hitherto we have only laid the foundation of *Love*. Which ſuppoſes moreover that we have ſome ſympathy (as I may call it) with that which we apprehend to be ſo *Good* for us; and that we take our ſelves to be very much concerned in it. For there are ſome things that are excellent in themſelves; to which notwithſtanding we find little or no inclination; becauſe they are not ſutable to our diſpoſitions, neceſſities and deſires. The greateſt Perfections and merits oft-times meet with more Admirers than they do Vaſſals: and we ſee thoſe every day who bow other hearts to their ſervice, but find us inflexible to their attractions. As we have not an appetite to all ſorts of meats, even thoſe which we judge to be wholeſome and good; ſo we have not an inclination to all perſons and things, even thoſe which we hold to be well deſerving. We praiſe many things

which we do not love. We allow divers objects our approbation, which we cannot much affect. And that which in reason we needs muſt commend, yet doth not always command our hearts, and draw them to its embraces.

The Loadſtone, as is commonly obſerved, which draws Iron to it, finds Lead and Copper to have no perception of its touches: and that face, as I ſaid before, which bewitches ſome eyes, leaves others inſenſible of its beauty.

The *Love* then which we contract with any Good, ariſes from the convenience that is between us and it. We perceive an agreeableneſs in it, either to our needs or to our nature, and thence affection ſprings. The likeneſs and reſemblance that there is between two Beings, is not the only cauſe of their readineſs to embrace each the other: but the correſpondence alſo and proportion which the one bears to the others neceſſities, is a ſufficient ground of it. A man that languiſhes under a dangerous ſickneſs, may conceive a great affection for an incomparable and very compaſſionate Phyſician, though there be no ſimilitude between them; becauſe he apprehends that

that ſufficiency in him, which is able to ſupply the great defects and wants that are at preſent in himſelf. But when theſe two, *correſpondence* and *ſimilitude* (which ſeveral have ſuch power over the affections) ſhall both meet together in one thing; ſo that what we want is that to which by nature we incline; it cannot fail to produce a love exceeding all other, in intire union, ardency and perpetuity. For how can we refuſe to yield to that Good (or what would we have more than that) which our hearts feel at once, to bear a great reſemblance to them, and to anſwer all or moſt of their needs? a Good which is what we are, and what we would be too: a Good wherein we ſee the image of our ſelves, in that perfection to which we deſire to be advanced?

All they therefore who would be truly diſpoſed to love the appearing of our Lord, muſt have a deep apprehenſion of the meanneſs and vileneſs of this preſent ſtate. They muſt be poſſeſſed with a ſerious ſenſe of their many imperfections, and great weakneſs in the beſt condition that this World affords; of the poverty and emptineſs of all earthly enioyments;

yea, and of the ſcantineſs and narrowneſs of all thoſe Divine participations, which their Souls are here capable to be bleſſed withal. And then the Appearing of our Lord will ſeem a Good ſo ſuitable to them, that they cannot chuſe but have the ſame affection for it, that a crazy and diſeaſed perſon hath to the moſt skilful Phyſician. In hope that He will perfect their nature, cure the diſorders, under which they labour, ſupply their defects, fill their appetites, nay enlarge their capacities, and raiſe them to a greater pitch of true goodneſs and bliſs.

Let us ſuppoſe ſuch perſons to be ſo much in the favour of God as to have a liberal ſhare even in the bleſſings of this World, as well as of thoſe which are more peculiarly in the gift of our Saviour Chriſt: yet it is impoſſible, one would think they ſhould be ſo much pleaſed in the higheſt Dignities that can be conferred on them; in the rareſt Delicates that the Bounty of Nature, or curioſity of Art can provide for them; in the ſociety of the choiceſt and deareſt Friends; or (I may add) in their own ſecret joy, though deſcending from heaven to them; as not to think ſtill that it is far more de-

ſirable

firable to see the Lord Jesus come to promote them and all their pious Relations and Friends to an incomparably better condition in his Celestial Kingdom.

It is their interest to have Him appear again; and besides they have such a likeness and resemblance to Him, that the bent and inclination of their Souls cannot but make them long after the sight of Him, as a Good more delightful and agreeable than any other. For there is another Coming of Christ, before that which we expect, *Quo per totum tempus in Ecclesia sua venit, &c.* (as S^t *Austin* speaks *) by which He comes, through all the time between his first appearing and the last, in his Church; that is, his Members, *particulatim atque paulatim,* working in every one of them by little and little; according to his promise, xiv. *Joh.* 21, 23. that if any man keep His Commandments He will look upon it as such a testimony of his love, that He will love that man, and the Father will love him; *and we will come* (saith He) *unto him, and make our abode with him.* Now when we heartily entertain Him, and He is so truly setled there, that we are made Partakers of his Blessed nature and disposition, and

* L. xx. de Civit. Dei, Cap. v.

all

all the lineaments of Him (if I may ſo ſpeak) are drawn upon our hearts: We ſhall find them inclined to wiſh for the day, when he will complete his work, and fill up the whole Image of Himſelf, to the very life; and not only make us glad with the light of his countenance, but make us look perfectly like Him, and intirely aſſimilate us to His own moſt Bleſſed Nature.

Do you not ſee how the holy Scriptures repreſent this Appearing of Jeſus as the moſt lovely of all other things; and therefore apt to draw our hearts with an irreſiſtible force towards it? It is expreſſed there, I obſerve, under the character of that which is wont to touch the Soul with ſuch an agreeable ſtroke, that it raviſhes it from it ſelf; I mean Beauty. For as that is nothing elſe, according to *Plato*, but the ſplendor and glittering of that which is good; ſo this appearing is ſet forth as exceeding bright, ſplendid and glorious, and as that which will make us ſo alſo: to the end we may be affected with it, as the moſt beautiful ſight that ever was. Read ii. *Tit.* 13. xiij. *Matth.* 43. And S^t *Luke*, I told you before, mentions a threefold

Glory

Glory wherein He will appear, *His own, His Fathers, and His holy Angels*, ix. 26. which is said, I believe, to make this day appear the more illustrious and amiable in our eyes.

The only visage of *Scipio*, we read, made him Master of some barbarous Nations; he piercing further into their hearts by his countenance, than by his Sword. And *Heliogabalus*, as bad as he was, was no sooner shown by his Mother to the Souldiers, but, from Priest of the *Sun*, he became Emperor of the World. Why then should not the beauty of that day, when the Prince of all the Kings of the Earth shall appear in the most glorious splendor, attended by the greatest Principalities of Heaven, with all their shining Hosts, in admirable order, captivate the hearts of all those that love Him, since there is none so powerful, did they but *behold his glory* (as the Apostles did) and look upon Him *as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, to draw those to his Religion who love Him not? How can they refuse to yield to, do Him homage, and suffer themselves to be carried after Him as the Conquerour of all Souls; and above all desire to wait upon

Him

Him at his appearing; which they diſcern will be ſo glorious and render them ſo amiable, that they will become (as I doubt not to ſhow) a conſiderable addition to his Triumphs?

The hearts of all the faithful cannot chuſe but leap for joy, at the very thought of ſo great a Good, though widely diſtant from them; and wiſh it would come nearer to make them happy by its preſence with them. They are apt to ſigh and ſay, when they deeply ponder theſe things, with the Prophet *David*, in another caſe, ci. *Pſal.* 2.

O when wilt thou come unto me! It is a long time, O Lord, ſince thou didſt promiſe to come. We have waited for thee and for thy ſalvation, more than they that wait for the morning; I ſay more than they that wait for the morning. May I not pray thee to haſten thy deſired coming? O when wilt thou diſplay thy ſelf, and ſhow thy Glory more openly before us? O when wilt thou be pleaſed to impreſs thine own Image more fairly on us? When ſhall thoſe little touches that we have received of thee, be perfected, and figured into a more exact reſemblance of thy beauty?

We

We cannot refrain, but we must long to have all our defects supplied out of thy fullness; to have all spots wiped off our souls, to be rendred clear as the Sun, free as the Air, and as unstained as the pure influences of Heaven. For how should we think, O blessed Lord, that we bear any love to thee, if we can be content to remain (as we are) so much unlike thee? There is none can see thee, and not ardently love thee. There is none ever beheld thy face, that was not impatient to be conformed to thee. None have tasted thy sweetness, who could be satisfied till they came to the fountain of it.

Therefore suffer us, Good Lord, to beg some more of thee, since thou hast given us so much. Yea, suffer us to ask when thou wilt come and give us all, that so we may ask no more of thee. O how joyful will that time be, which shall make us so complete, that all our business will be to praise and thank thee! How comfortable will thy appearing be, which shall make us appear with thee?

O come, Dear Saviour, that we may come to thee. Come, that we may so come to thee, as to be for ever with thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Two further steps in this Love *of Christ's Appearing.*

III.

NOW when we feel our souls thus touched with any thing that seems very good and convenient for us; the first approaches of it beget a complacence in the heart, and give it a sense of no small joy and pleasure. For when the Image, you may observe, of any good that imprinted it self, is on the mind or imagination, it instantly endeavours to proceed further, and creeps into the heart, the will and affections; which cannot but turn themselves towards it, to feel what this is which shows so fairly, and comes so kindly to salute them. Now when the heart thus looks about to see what it is that courts it; you shall find, if you mark it, that at the very first greeting it is entertained with a certain delight

delight and pleasure; which this new-come Gueſt brings along with it, to invite us to it.

For if you examine things ſtrictly, and with ſuch a curious eye, as ſome have done; you will perceive that this Image which imprints it ſelf upon us, is of the ſame nature with light or any ſhining Body. It caſts, as I may ſay, its bright rays round about the ſoul; it diſperſes it ſelf by a kind of illumination, into the will and affections, that they may be ſenſible how amiable it is: Which when they are, the Light is not more pleaſant to the eyes, than this is to the heart. It rejoyces in this good which preſents it ſelf to its enjoyment, as a Man doth in the welcome approach of an ancient Friend; whom he is glad to ſee, but much more glad to feel in his arms.

And ſuch is the contentment that the belief of Chriſt's appearing gives to all thoſe who fix their thoughts upon it. It cheers and refreſhes their ſpirits. It ſmooths their minds, and makes them ſo calm and ſtill, that the *Halcyon* days are but fabulous ſhadows of that reſt and peace which then they feel in themſelves. Their heart is intirely delighted and ſa-

tisfied

ſatisfied with this belief. It is ſo tranſported beyond it ſelf with this comfortable perſwaſion, that it can eaſily overlook all other joys, when it lifts up it ſelf in the contemplation of this incomparable bleſſedneſs. No Muſick can then be ſo ſweet to the ear, as the ſound of the Trump of God. No Beauty ſo fair to the eye, as that Glory which ſhall be reveal'd. No Company ſo inviting and welcome to the heart, as that great Aſſembly of Chriſt, with all his holy Angels.

And hark, O my ſoul, Do they not call upon thee to caſt a look that way, that thou may'ſt behold them in their ſurpaſſing Glory. Liſten a while, and hear if they do not ſay, We are preparing our ſelves, and making ready to come for thee, and for all thoſe that love his appearing. O hearken again, my Soul, what is it they ſay to thee? Turn thy ſelf about, and lift up thine eyes towards Heaven, that thou may'ſt know what it is that's promiſed to thee.

Will thy Lord indeed come again in Power and great Glory? Will He once more leave his heavenly place, and de-

ſcend

ſcend to call us up to himſelf? Shall we ſee Him who loves us ſo much, and be transformed at the ſight of Him? O welcome News! When didſt thou meet with any tidings like to this? which ſheds ſuch a ſudden and tranſcendent joy and gladneſs abroad in thy heart, and prevents my forward thoughts, which were going to exhort thee to rejoice? What hadſt thou loſt, if thou hadſt turned away thine eyes from this bliſsful ſight? How great an happineſs hadſt thou been deprived of, if thine heart had not opened, when the report of His coming knockt at its door?

But, O my Soul, how ſweet then will this appearing it ſelf be, the hope of which is ſo delicious? How will that ſight intrance us, the News of which at this diſtance is ſo comfortable to us? Into what raptures will it caſt us, which now inſpires ſuch joy into our hearts? What a bright day will that be, which through all the Clouds wherein we are wrapt, ſpreads round about us ſuch a cheerful light? If the repreſentation of our Lord in the holy Sacrament of His Body and Bloud, and that but in his ſufferings and low eſtate, give ſuch ſatisfaction to the heart; What will the ſight of Himſelf

do to us, and that when he appears in his glorious Majesty, as the Lord of Heaven and Earth?

O sweet Jesus, come, and let us see what that Majesty and Glory is! come and draw aside the Veil, do away the Shadows, and present thy self as the King of Glory before our eyes. They have long looked for thee. They would gladly know what it is to behold thee in thy Glory. O how gladly would they understand what the meaning is of thy coming in the Clouds of Heaven? *The brightness of them, we believe, is infinitely beyond all that eye ever saw. The thoughts of it revive our hearts, and make our faces shine. Our souls are drawn out, and run to meet thee, by the joy we have conceived at the promise of thy coming. Though we have not seen thee, yet we love thee; and though we now see thee not, yet believing* we rejoyce (*O that we could say*) with joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

1 Pet. i. 8.

O blessed Lord, do not deny to complete our joys, by hastning thy coming, to let us see thee. Come and fill our eyes, which cannot here be satisfied with seeing. Come and shew us thy Glory; that we may say it sufficeth. *And let our hearts, in the mean time, rejoice in nothing so much, as in the hope*

hope of thy Glory. Let them always prefer this above their chiefeſt joy; and never wiſh for any thing with ſo much fervour, as for thy coming.

IV.

Now from this pleaſant ſenſe which is excited in us by the appearance of any Good to us, there naturally follows, not only a deſire but, a vehement motion, and as it were an effuſion of the heart, towards that which is ſo agreeable, and promiſes it ſo much ſatisfaction. Complacence, you muſt know, is but the beginning of love. For by that delicious pleaſure which the heart feels, when any good approaches, it is invited further; and even forced to pour forth it ſelf upon that fair thing which preſents it ſelf ſo ſweetly to it; and this is properly Love.

As ſoon as ever we diſcover any thing that is ſuitable to us, we feel our hearts inſtantly ſtruck with a ſecret joy, and are marvellouſly delighted in it. And this delectable touch is no ſooner perceived, but it ſweetly, yet ſtrongly draws us to go towards that thing, which at

firſt ſight gave us ſuch a pleaſure; and will yield, we hope, a far greater, when we approach ſo near it, as to get poſſeſſion of it. Complacence or delight then, is but the firſt ſtirring or motion, which a good thing cauſes in our heart. This pleaſing motion and agitation of the Spirits, is attended preſently with a melting and as it were effuſion of the heart; whereby we run out to meet that beloved object, and entertain it into our Souls; and in this, as I ſaid, properly conſiſts the very being of Love. Which is ſo manifeſt in an heart duely affected towards the appearing of our bleſſed Lord; that there cannot be a greater proof of the truth of this deſcription. For it feels ſo great a pleaſure in the lively belief of his coming, that it is drawn thereby quite out of it ſelf; and cannot chuſe but reſign up it ſelf intirely to that glorious Prince, that He may make it appear together with Him. It eaſily diſſolves in that heavenly warmth, and loſing all its power to contain it ſelf in its former bounds, flows to Him the Lord of Life, as to its proper place. It is lifted up towards Heaven, and would fain be there where He is; from whom this

this pleaſure comes. For with him is the Fountain of Life; and therefore where ſhould a devout Soul ſet *its affections but on thoſe things which are above*, (as S^t *Paul* ſpeaks, iij. *Col.* 1, 2, 3.) where Chriſt *ſitteth at the right hand of God?* Which when they mightily affect the heart, it feels as if it were diſſolving, into that *life which is hid with Chriſt in God.*

That future life or bliſs is *ſafe* indeed, becauſe it is in the cuſtody of Chriſt, and in a glorious place where God dwells in light inacceſſible. But who can abſtain from deſiring, it ſhould be no longer *hid* and reſerved, but made manifeſt and ſhown, as it will be at the appearing of *Chriſt?* For ſo the Apoſtle adds immediately (as if He would anſwer their Queſtion who might ask when ſhall this *Life* be diſcovered?) *When Chriſt who is our Life* (*i. e.* the cauſe of it, who will give us this life) *ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with Him in Glory.*

O what a joyful word is this! What ſhould hinder an heart, that is poſſeſſed with a full belief of it, from running thither with all ſpeed; whither it is called by ſo great a joy, as ſent from thence into it? Into whoſe arms ſhould

it leap but only His, the expectation of whose appearing creates that exultation? There is none in heaven it can desire but Him, with whom its life is hid; and whom is there on Earth that it can desire besides Him?

Come, saith such a soul to it self, *and lift up thy head: Thy Lord I hear is coming; let us arise and go and meet Him. Let us leave this Earth, and ascend up towards Heaven; where He is, who is our Life. Let us raise up our dull thoughts thitherward; and fix our minds as oft as we can, on the Glory that shall be revealed.*

Let us stir up our selves, and with the most ardent desires and affections of our heart, get us near Him as ever we are able. Let us go, O my Soul, and at least make a Present of our very heart to Him; beseeching Him most earnestly to possess Himself intirely of it. Let us invite Him to prevent His appearing; and to come a little beforehand to manifest Himself unto us, and to take up His abode with us.

O blessed Jesus, let us say, who art our Life; be intreated to come hither (now that we cannot come up to thee) and live in us. Show thy self in this Soul, and let not me live

live any longer, but do thou live in me: let the life I live in the flesh be by thy faith, O thou Son of God. Thou hast loved me, and given thy self for me: O love me so much (I again beseech thee) as to live in me. I would begin that life which is hid with thee, in resigning my self to thee, that thy Will may be done in me. Never did I feel such complacence in following mine own, as I have since I was inclined to follow after thee; who wilt lead me, I see, to immortal Glory.

Blessed be that day which made me sensible of such happiness. Blessed be the day which directed mine eyes to look for thy appearing. What can I wish for more than to be blessed with the sight of it; and till it come, to have my heart always in love with it? I am going towards it by these desires; and I will excite my self to go the faster, because that blissful sight is still making nearer approaches.

What do we mean, my Soul, to hang thus towards this Earth? Why do we stay here, when we see Jesus preparing Himself to make another Journey to us? Why do we not advance towards Him; as if we were desirous to have Him come, and to let us see Him? Why do we not with all speed

make our ſelves ready to receive Him? What is it that makes us ſo ſlow in our motions towards Him; *who when He appears, will come as ſwift as the lightning unto us. Up, up, O my Soul, let not thy Lord find thee, when He comes, poſting after theſe worldly vanities, purſuing of thy ſinful pleaſures; but onward in thy way, gone very far in devout affections, ardent deſires, and holy hopes, to meet His Glorious Majeſty.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Progreſs of this Love to Chriſt's Appearing in three *Steps more.*

V.

AND yet this *Love* cannot content it ſelf with inward motions and aſpirations of the Soul, towards the appearing of our Lord; but conſtantly excites all ſuch actions as are requiſite for the attaining of ſo great a Good. If we eſteem any thing highly, and feel it exceeding agreeable to our hearts deſire, we do not willingly reſt in the pleaſing paſſions it raiſes up in our hearts; but they carry us out in earneſt endeavours to be Owners of it. And the influence it hath upon us is ſo powerful, and it doth ſo ſtrongly draw us after it; that it will not ſuffer any thing to put a ſtop to the current of our affections, when they are iſſuing out unto it.

There are certain imperfect motions in our hearts, which we are apt to call Love,

Love, that by no means deſerve that name; being only a good liking of that, which we do not yet truly love. They are called in the Schools, *Velleities*, wiſhes and wouldings, as we ſpeak; half a will which we feel for divers excellent things, but never come to any effect. The reaſon is, becauſe the appearance of ſome extreme great difficulty, or the force of ſome contrary deſire, either holds the Soul in her courſe (as ſhe is moving towards them) and beats her affections back again; or elſe turns the ſtream of them quite another way.

Love therefore is a generous vigour in the heart, which incites and ſtrengthens it to fair and noble actions, for the effecting its deſires; though oppoſed by never ſo many Enemies. It is called by ſome the fire wherewith the Soul is clothed, which forces its way through all reſiſtances. A certain ardor in us, which inſpires us to worthy though difficult undertakings. An heroick paſſion, which makes us think nothing impoſſible, that is needful to be done, for the compaſſing the end at which it aims.

Thus then muſt our ſouls be carried, with ſuch ſtrong affections, towards the appear-

appearing of Christ, if we heartily love it. We must omit nothing that we know is required of us, for the obtaining the blessings which it will bring unto us. We must bid all things stand aside that would impede us; and tell them they must pretend to no interest at all in us, when we are in pursuit of so great a Good. The love of which will soon reconcile us to the hardest Duties; and endear to us the most self-denying courses. It will alter the countenance of sufferings, and make all the troubles of this life cast a kinder aspect on us. Nay, it will enable us to look Death in the face with a cheerful heart. For it will present it to us in another shape; and make the Grave, that house of darkness, seem like the beautiful Gate of the Temple of God.

Whatsoever our Lord declares to be his pleasure, this will bid us do it, though we be undone by that means in all our temporal concerns. And when they tempt us to murmur and repine, to cry and lament at our parting with them: Love will bid us be of good comfort; because this is the way to have a fair reception by our Lord, when He shall see we have quitted all for His sake. We cannot indeed

deed keep them always if we would; yet ſuch is his love, our faith tells us, that if we conſent to forſake them beforehand upon his account, He will not ſuffer us to be Loſers by it: And therefore our love both to Him, and to our ſelves, prompts us not to ſtick at any thing which will be pleaſing to Him, though for the preſent it be harſh to us. It teaches us to reaſon as S^t *Peter* doth, 2 *Pet.* iij. 11, 12. *Seeing all theſe things muſt be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs; Looking for and haſting unto the coming of the Day of the Lord?*

What manner of perſons? Truly, ſuch as are preparing a room in their hearts for their Lord. Such as hope then to compleat their Eſpouſals to Chriſt. And therefore muſt *be holy and without blame before Him in love*, (i. *Epheſ.* 4.) and ſtudy nothing ſo much as to be found acceptable in his ſight (who is the Lord of their hearts, and their very life;) and to be nobly entertained by Him, when He ſhall come again to receive His loving Subjects up unto Himſelf. *We have our converſation in heaven* (ſaith S^t *Paul*) *from whence we expect the Saviour, the Lord*

Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He can subdue all things unto Himself. For in all reason they that expect such a sight should fit themselves for it by a conversation suitable to the dignity to which they shall be then preferred. So *Oecumenius*, I remember, expounds these words of S^t *Paul* to *Timothy*, when he answers the Question, *who is it that loves his appearing*, in this manner, ὁ ἄξια πεάτ̃ων ἀμοιβῶν χρηζῶν, *He that doth things worthy of excellent recompences.*

Which if we love, it will not fail to raise us unto a heavenly life. If we wait for Him to come from Heaven, it will lift up our hearts, and carry them thither. We shall disburden them of all carnal affections, and throw off the load of the cares of this world, that we may be light and airy, ready to fly up above, when He calls us to be with Him. We shall labour to cleanse and purifie our Souls as He is pure; to adorn them with His Graces; and, in one word, *to put on the Lord Jesus*, that He may see Himself in us, when He comes.

And

And wilt thou come then, O bleſſed Saviour, (are ſuch ſouls apt to ſay) *may we confidently look for thee from Heaven to be our Saviour? Why do we queſtion it, ſince we have thy faithful word for it; who haſt promiſed that we ſhall ſee thee as thou art, and be for ever with thee? O aſtoniſhing Love! what Riches of Grace is this? Was it not enough that thou condeſcendedſt once to come and ſave us; but that thou determineſt to come again! Canſt thou not ſatisfie thy love unleſs we be where thou art? And wilt thou leave thy Seat in Heaven to come and fetch us, rather than leave us here upon the Earth?*

O Love! what is like unto thee? Thou haſt a mighty power! who can underſtand the wonders that thou doſt? O make it great in us, good Lord, as well as in thy ſelf. Cauſe it to do marvels in our hearts, as it hath done in thine. Let our Souls be unſatisfied, till they come to thee. Call forth all their Powers, as thou haſt done their deſires, that they may reſtleſly move towards thee. Make them unwearied in well-doing, ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and abundant in thy work; that they may not miſs of thee.

O moſt

O most gracious Lord, suffer nothing in this World to discourage these hearts, that have wholly given themselves to thee. Cease not still to excite and quicken them; since they have been already touched and awakened by thine Omnipotent love. But preserve such a flame alive in them, that they may ardently follow thee. Inspire them with zealous resolution, never to desist in their pursuit of that blessed Hope thou hast set before them. Strengthen them against all the power of their Enemies; and let thy love burn with such fervour in them, that none of the Opposers of their holy desires may be able to stand before it. Arm them, good Lord, with this invincible force of heavenly love, which may make them noble Conquerours, and prepare them for thy glorious Triumph.

VI.

But true love cannot stay here neither; nor content it self with some endeavours to enjoy that Good, which propounds it self to its affections; for it ever tends to an *Union* with that lovely thing towards which it is moved. When the Soul runs forth to see what it

is

is that calls out its desires; the intention of that motion is, to possess it self of that amiable object; if it answer its first pretences, and prove such as it promised. No sooner doth any thing appear beautiful and lovely to the mind or imagination, but presently the heart sends Messengers (as I may call the Spirits that issue out of it) to bring it home, and conduct it to take up its lodging there. This is the meaning of that effusion of the Soul which I spoke of before; whereby it would dissolve it self into that which it loves, and be so mingled as to become perfectly one with it.

When an agreeable object, I told you, hath imprinted its image on the mind, it casts a certain light into the Soul, and shines so comfortably on the affections, that they are powerfully warmed and excited by it. Now when the heart is full of this splendor, it doth not satisfie it self with those rays and emissions of light and heat which are imparted to it; but strives to unite it self to the very Center of it, and would feel the Spring from whence such life and pleasure flows.

Just as Iron, when it is impregnated with the virtue of the Loadstone, is not con-

contented with thoſe effluxes it hath received, but moves towards the Body from which they ſtream; ſo is it with an heart which receives this joyful News from our Lord, that He will appear again in Glory. It amuſes not it ſelf in thoſe delightful thoughts; it ſits not down in thoſe raviſhing joys; nor thinks it enough to be melted in the paſſion of love to Him, and to ſo great a bleſſedneſs: But it ſeeks to knit it ſelf to the very mind and ſpirit of Chriſt, that it may feel how bleſſed He intends to make it. It ſtudies, I mean, to be changed and transformed more and more into His likeneſs; and by an intire agreement of will with his will, to begin its transfiguration, and be prepared for a perfect and eternal union with Him.

It is not ſufficient to a heart that is in love with that Great Day, to live in a conſtant expectation of it (which is excited by the Revelation He hath made of it in his Goſpel, and is the light which he now ſends from heaven into us:) but it would gladly prevent, as I have already noted, that happy time; by feeling Him appear every day more gloriouſly there. It longs to ſhine more clearly in the light of his

heavenly knowledge; to burn more brightly in the ardours of his love; and by being more richly adorned with the Graces of His Spirit, to be recommended to all in the Beauty of His Holineſs.

There is nothing can better explain all that hath been hitherto ſaid, than the example of the Load-ſtone, which I juſt now mentioned. As ſoon as a piece of Iron feels the power of it, we ſee how it turns it ſelf towards it; and by its quivering declares the complacence and pleaſure (as we may call it) that it takes in its touches. Then we behold how it creeps a little towards it; ſtill advancing and bearing it ſelf more and more that way, till it come to join it ſelf with that thing, from whence it firſt received thoſe inclinations. Here you have all the parts of love, that have been already mentioned, moſt lively repreſented. Firſt, the mind apprehends, and is made ſenſible of ſome Good, which communicates an Image or Picture of it ſelf unto it. Then the heart is ſecretly ſurpriſed with a certain delight, by which the agreeableneſs of that image intices it from it ſelf. And then it moves towards it, and goes to ſee it. And at laſt, when it finds

it

it to be what it appeared, it flies, as I may ſay, into its embraces, and endeavours to knit it ſelf ſo faſt unto it, that they may never hereafter be divided.

And juſt ſuch like is the temper of that Soul, which heartily loves our Lords Appearing. Which it perceives to be a happineſs ſo great, that it cannot be ſatisfied with any entertainment it finds in this World, but preſſes forward to the bleſſed ſight of Him in all his glory. Nothing can quiet it, nor hinder its motion, till it become one Spirit with Him. All that it hath as yet attained, all the wiſdom wherewith it is filled, all the joys of piety which it ſometime feels, are little and inconſiderable in compariſon with what it deſires to feel. And therefore on it proceeds in a ſerious ſtudy to be more like Him; out of a deſign never to ceaſe its earneſt endeavours, till it come to be for ever with Him.

O thou great and moſt Magnetick Good! (ſhould every pious heart ſay) *O thou ſovereign attractive of all ſouls! I feel my ſelf wonderfully touched by thee. Thou haſt put my ſpirit, which was fooliſhly wandring*

after other things, in a ſetled motion unto thee. O what an inclination haſt thou awakened in my heart, to be with thee! Thou haſt mightily ſtirred all the Powers of my Soul, which is wholly turned about, to look moſt earneſtly towards thee.

O ceaſe not to ſhine perpetually into this Cloudy mind, which is all in darkneſs without thee. Ceaſe not to invigorate this dull and ſluggiſh ſpirit, which is thus excited by thee. O ſpare not thoſe mighty effluxes of thy love; but draw me ſtill after thee. I cannot be willing to ſtand at any diſtance from thee; nor to ſtop my progreſs till I be cloſely united to thee. Therefore ſtill continue to make me feel thy power, till I be ſo happy as to move no more, but to reſt in thee.

Couldſt not thou be pleaſed, O bleſſed Lord, with any thing leſs than an Union with ſuch ſinful fleſh, as this of ours is? would it not ſuffice thee to look down from heaven upon us, and ſhow us a glimpſe of thy Glory; but thou muſt come alſo and dwell among us; and make thy ſelf to be bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, that we might be one with thee? How can I be contented then, only with looking up unto thee? How ſhould I be ſatisfied if I have

nothing

nothing more, but merely ſome glances from thee? O my moſt gracious Lord, give me leave to imitate thy love. Suffer me to deſire and ſeek to become what thou art, by being perfectly transformed into thy likeneſs. And do not think it too great a preſumption, if I wiſh and long to be ſo united to thee, My Love, as to be for ever with thee.

Let me have the happineſs at leaſt to ſigh and mourn after thine Appearing. Affect my heart ſo ſenſibly with it, that I may groan in ſpirit (if I can do no better) for that bleſſed time, when I ſhall loſe the ſight of thy face no more, when I ſhall lye under the warm beams of the light of thy countenance; when I ſhall live in the very element of love; when I ſhall be ſo near thee, that I ſhall feel my ſelf to move in the very ſame Orb with thee, thou bright Sun of Righteouſneſs.

I ſeem now alas! to be a great way off from thee. I feel my ſelf like the cold Earth, in the Winter; which turns towards the Sun, and looks upon that glorious Light of Heaven, that great Lover of all the World, but alas! is very far removed from its comfortable Rays. O that I might be ſo happy as to approach nearer to thee! O that I

were fixed, and might never turn about any more from thee! Let the time come, that there ſhall be no more night, but a perpetual day with me. O haſten the time, when I my ſelf ſhall ſhine like the Sun, in thy Celeſtial Glory.

VII.

Now in the mean time, till Love come to a perfect union, as it is inceſſant in its motion, ſo it grows more vehement in its deſires and endeavours. For as frequent agitations make the fire burn more fiercely, ſo doth the ſtirring of this paſſion make it break out with a brighter flame. The deſire of union encreaſes the ſwiftneſs of its motion; and the more ſpeed it makes, the nearer it is like to come to its deſired union. And, which is very conſiderable, the more earnest and aſſiduous our motion is towards any Good, the greater hopes we have that we ſhall enjoy it; and the greater our hopes are, the more are we ſtill pricked on and ſpurred forward in the purſuit of that which we would fain enjoy.

A thing which is of exceeding great moment in this pious and devout love of Chriſtian

Chriſtian people. For without a *GOOD HOPE* (which S^t *Paul* ſaith, our Lord, *who is our Hope*, hath given us, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 16. 1 *Tim.* i. 1.) our motion would ſlacken, if not be extinguiſhed. We ſhould have no heart to proſecute our deſign, but let it fall immediately; if it were not *in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promiſed*, i. *Tit.* 2. As on the contrary by the Help of this ſure and certain Hope, our diligence is doubled; and ſuch Oil poured on our Wheels, as makes them move not only more eaſily, but with greater ſpeed and quickneſs alſo.

All the Lovers therefore of Chriſt's Appearing, are ſaid to *wait* for it, to *expect* it, and to *look* for the coming of *that bleſſed Hope*, as you ſhall ſee in the concluſion of this Argument, from thoſe well-known places, iij. *Phil.* 20. ij. *Tit.* 13. and many other. And if you examine the holy Scriptures carefully, you ſhall find that this is comprehended in the *love* we ought to have for his Appearing; being ſuch a natural effect of love, that they are put indifferently the one for the other. As may be ſeen by comparing theſe two places together, 1 *Cor.* ij. 9.

with lxiv. *Iſai.* 4. in the former of which the Apoſtle ſays, the things which ſurpaſs our conception, are prepared by God *for them that love him*; and in the other the Prophet ſaith, He hath prepared them *for him that waiteth for Him.*

Juſt as the people of *Iſrael* praying without the Sanctuary (in the Court to which they were confined) waited for the Prieſt when he ſhould come from the Altar of Incenſe, or rather for the High-Prieſt on the day of Atonement to return from the moſt holy place and the Ark of the Covenant, to beſtow the bleſſing on them: So do all good Souls, who are devoted ſincerely to the ſervice of Chriſt, while they remain in this outward Court, (the Earth, wherein we dwell, which is at a great diſtance from the Heavens) look up to the holy place, where *Jeſus the great High-Prieſt of our profeſſion is*; and wait for the time when He will come forth to bleſs them, ſaying, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the beginning of the World.*

iij. Heb. 1. & iv. 15.

xxv. Matt. 34.

They cannot but frequently caſt their eyes and turn their hearts that way, as the place of their Reſt, which He is gone before

before to prepare for them. They are ever calling upon their Souls to *follow hard* after their dear Saviour, as *David* ſays (lxiij. *Pſal.* 8.) his heart did after the enjoyment of God in his Sanctuary. For this they ſeek, as he there ſpeaks, with thirſty deſires, *to ſee his power and his glory*, ſo as they have never yet ſeen him, nor can ſee him; no not in their neareſt approaches to him, while they live in theſe Earthly Tabernacles. They wiſh therefore He would come and bleſs them with a clear and full ſight of Him. After this their deſires grow daily more ardent; and they endeavour to ſtir up ſtronger and more affectionate motions towards ſo great an happineſs. They are apt to cry out, ſaying, *Draw us, and we will run after thee*; yea, we will fly; we will take the wings of an Eagle (in our paſſionate deſires) that we may mount up aloft, and get more and more above this World to be with thee.

And this gives them good Hopes likewiſe, that they ſhall be with Him; inſomuch that they cannot but ſay:

O bleſſed Jeſus, thou haſt ſet our Souls into a longing for thee; and now they cannot

not ceaſe to deſire to come to thee. Thou haſt made us believe the moſt excellent ſurpaſſing Glory, wherein thou ſhineſt; and ever ſince we cannot chuſe but look towards it, and wiſh to behold thee in that Glory. If we be very earneſt for this ſight, if our

xlij. Pſal. 2. *Souls ſigh and ſay,* O when ſhall we come and appear before thee; *we do but return thine own breath, who haſt inſpired us with theſe deſires after thee.*

And may we not hope to come thither where thou art, when thou thy ſelf attracteſt our ſouls to thee? Wilt thou not ſatisfie thoſe longings, which not we, but thou haſt raiſed in our hearts? Give us leave to remember thee of what thou thy ſelf haſt

xx. Joh. 29. *ſaid, who didſt pronounce thoſe* BLESSED WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED. *O let it be unto thy ſervants according to thy word. For we are ſuch Believers, as thou haſt bleſſed. We never ſaw thee, and yet believe*

xiij. Joh. 3. thou cameſt forth from God, and art gone to God; *and art moſt high in the*

ix. Rom. 5. *Glory of the Father,* God bleſſed for evermore. *Do not our hearts cleave unto thee, though they have only heard of thee? Are not our eyes continually towards thee, though they have never yet beheld thee?*

Thou

Thou wilt not always ſure abſent thy ſelf; but turn our faith at laſt into a ſight of thee.

For what is the BLESSEDNESS *of which thou ſpakeſt, and haſt faithfully promiſed to ſuch Believers? Is it not that they ſhall one day behold thy glorious face, and reign with thee in thy Glory? Is it not that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto them here; and at laſt appear again to take them to thy ſelf, that they may live where thou art? O dear Saviour, as thou haſt made us to* BELIEVE *in this manner; ſo make us likewiſe thus* BLESSED. *As we have received thee, though we have not ſeen thee; ſo let this be the reward of our receiving thee, that we may ſee thee. We will hope thou wilt make us thus happy; as thou haſt made us thus faithful. We will expect till thou makeſt us ſee what thou haſt promiſed, as thou haſt made us do what thou haſt commanded. We will rejoice in hope of thy Glory; and do thou make our joy to be full: yea, bring us unto thee, and bid us enter into the joy of thee our Lord.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

This Love *to the* Appearing *of our Lord further deſcribed in* three *other fruits or marks of it.*

VIII.

AND now can any Soul chuſe but think of that perpetually, which it moſt dearly loves? Doth not every Good uſe to preſent it ſelf continually to the mind that is inamour'd of it, and remember us of its beauty? There is no Queſtion to be made of it. The very ardency of our affection for it, doth more imprint and engrave it on our mind; and when, by any participation of it, we feel how good it is, we preſs it harder, and ſink it deeper into our hearts. There is no man, for inſtance, who hath ſetled his love upon an agreeable perſon, but He finds the image of that friend always before his eyes. It accompanies him every where, and cleaves inſeparably to his thoughts.

thoughts. It is a great part of his pleaſure to entertain himſelf with the ſhadow of that in which he hath lodg'd his heart.

And therefore if we love the appearing of our Lord, we ſhall ſolace our ſelves often with the kind. *In the multitude*, eſpecially or tumult *of our thoughts within us* (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, xciv. 19.) *the comforts of it will delight our Souls.* We ſhall be daily calling upon them, and exhorting them to look towards it; and to fix their thoughts and affections upon it. We ſhall be inclin'd to ſay, as the voice is in the Song of Songs, *Come my fair one, come away.*

O my chiefeſt Good, what ſhall I deſire or wiſh for ſo much, as for thy coming? What is it that I ever ſaw, which ſhould detain my eyes from thy incomparable beauty? Or where can I expect to ſatisfie their hunger, but only with the filling ſight of thee, at thy appearing? The ſpacious Heavens hope to be filled with the Majeſty of thy Glory. The Sun is but a weak Image of thy brightneſs, and will be content to go out to make room for thee when thou appeareſt.

reſt. All the Stars of light are ready to reſign their places, and leave the Sky to be illuminated by thee alone. Whatſoever is lovely and ſurprizes us with its beauty here, confeſſes it is but thy ſhadow, and that when thou breakeſt forth it muſt diſappear.

Fix my mind therefore upon thy Glory; and let it henceforth imploy my buſie thoughts. Poſſeſs thy ſelf, O Lord of Life and Glory, intirely of this heart, which hath been too long eſtranged from thee. Impreſs ſuch a lively ſenſe of thee and of thy Glory there; that I may ſooner forget my ſelf than thee and thy appearing. Make it my greateſt pleaſure to ſit hours and days and years, to think of thy ſo-much-deſired coming. When I meet with my deareſt Relations and Friends, let nothing entertain us with ſuch delight, as to think of being caught up together in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air.

Let us love to ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and to talk of thy power; to utter abundantly the memory of thy great goodneſs, and to ſing of thy righteouſneſs. *Let us wiſh with united hearts* to ſee thy power and glory; *and to behold thee coming, according to thy faithful promiſe,*

out

out of thy heavenly Sanctuary. Let it be our ſweeteſt joy to inſpire each others hearts with theſe holy hopes; and to ſtir up one another to love and to good works. And when thou comeſt, O Lord, may every one of us be found ſo doing.

IX.

Theſe are ſome of the pantings of an heart, which loves and bears in mind the appearing of Chriſt. For to ſay the truth, Love is the original and ſource of all the paſſions that we feel in our hearts. They all flow from this as from their Spring-head. They are but ſeveral motions which have their riſe from Love. Or, if you will ſo conceive it, nothing but different figures and ſhapes wherein it appears. It is love which fears, and love which grieves, and love which hopes, and love which rejoyces: there would be none of theſe, were it not for ſome good which we love; to which theſe and all the reſt of their Kindred, owe their birth and nouriſhment. When this is hindred in its deſigns, it breeds anger, or impatience, or fear, or ſadneſs, or ſome ſuch like commotion: And when

when this ſucceeds and proſpers in the purſuance of its ends; there ariſes hope, and contentment, and joy and gladneſs, as the natural iſſue of it.

They that love then Chriſt's appearing, will fear nothing ſo much as to loſe the bleſſedneſs which He will bring along with Him. Nothing will excite ſuch a diſpleaſure in their hearts, as that evil which would rob and defraud them of his favour at that happy day. And what is there that can give them ſuch a touch of ſadneſs, as the thought that they are ſo far diſtant from their Deareſt Lord? Or what can create ſuch joy, ſuch exultation of Spirit, as to hope they ſhall one day ſee Him, ſo as never to part from Him any more? In one word, all the paſſions of their Souls will run this way, and be concern'd for nothing ſo highly as this, that they may be *preſented faultleſs before the preſence of his Glory with exceeding joy.*

True indeed, O bleſſed Saviour, (doth ſuch an heart meditate in it ſelf) *I have had a thouſand fears in my breaſt. I have dreaded every ſmall danger in this World,*

as

as if it would prove my utter ruine. The terrors that have affrighted me, are as innumerable as the things I have fansied to be my happineſs. But now all theſe are willing to be gone, that they may make way for one greater fear; leſt I ſhould not enter with thee, when thou appeareſt, into thy reſt. O prevent ſo intolerable a miſchief! Whatſoever I loſe, I ſhall account my ſelf a Gainer; if I loſe not the bleſſing which thou wilt give us. Take all if thou pleaſeſt, I am content; ſo thou wilt give me a ſhare in thy Glory, when thou comeſt.

I have been too long peſtered with a world of ſenſual paſſions. Sometimes ſadneſs hath oppreſſed me; and then anger hath ſet me all on fire. Now vain joys have ſwelled my heart, and puffed me up; and again they have given place to grief, and ſorrow hath ſhrunk up my ſoul, and dried up my ſpirit. Fears and Hopes have toſſed me up and down, as in a tempeſtuous Sea. A ſmall matter hath created me much trouble; and I have longed for things, which promiſed much, but gave me little ſatisfaction. What a comfort is it, but to expect the day, which will ſettle and compoſe theſe tumults, in perpetual peace and quiet! I feel the thoughts of it already ap-

peasing my spirit, and bringing a Calm into my breast. And if the brightness of thy appearing did but always shine in my mind, it would dispel all the Clouds, and scatter the darkness, wherein all this confusion reigns. O let the splendor of that day irradiate my Soul, even at this distance from it; and leave no space void of its light and comfort. Yea, let it eclipse all other joys; and by its glistering beauty, cause the small contentments of this World, to seem but as so many Glow-worms, which shine only in the Night. I am sensible how short the sweetest enjoyments of this Life are of that Celestial happiness. The society of my Saviour, and of the inhabitants above, O how much is it to be preferred, even before the delightful company of those that most deserve my love! Who can do me no greater service, than by the innocent passion I have for them, to transport me with far greater, to that blessed Country; where I shall enjoy them without fear, and love them without danger. And O that all the fears I at any time have of losing the Dearest Creature in this World, may presently expire into a greater fear of being separated from my Lord. Let all my hopes and joys also about that, conclude in better hopes, and joyful

expectations

expectations of living together in the joy of our Father's house.

But as for other things, I discharge and renounce you, all you frivolous sinful delights. I am not afraid of any evil that man, or other Creature can do unto me; while my trust and my joy is in the Lord. Come troubles, come reproaches, come loss of Goods; I am not angry at it; so Jesus will but come: and they will also excite me to fasten mine eyes more stedfastly on Him and his appearing. This is my hope, this is my joy, this is the support and the satisfaction of my heart. This is the thing I am resolved to entertain my thoughts withall: and if I may but have this, let all the rest, O blessed Jesus, be even as thou pleasest.

X.

I have but one thing more to add, which is; that the Love which deserves this Character, is a setled constant affection; an habit and temper of the Soul which always abides. Not a sudden Fit of passion; but a fixed inclination, and rooted disposition to seek such a good as it desires. And so the word here used

by S^t *Paul* ſignifies, not barely *they that love*, but *they that have loved* his appearing. For ἠγαπηκόσι being in the time perfectly paſt, denotes that this hath been the ſtedfaſt bent of their hearts to look for Chriſt, and prepare themſelves in this manner for his coming.

The Image of any lovely perſon, when it firſt preſents it ſelf before us, is wont to come in a poſture of humility and ſubmiſſion; and ſeems to crave to be admitted into our hearts. It invites us with ſo much ſweetneſs and reſpect; as if it would be beholden to us, for our kind acceptance of it into our favour. But when it is once paſſionately entertained, and hath poſſeſſed it ſelf of our hearts; we find it changes its behaviour, and grows ſo imperious, that it requires what before it ſeemed to intreat. It becomes abſolute maſter of our hearts; and placing it ſelf there as the Governor of all our affections, will no more be denied in any of its demands.

And ſuch is the progreſs of the love of Chriſt, and his appearing in pious ſouls. He comes and intreats us at the firſt, or rather beſeeches us that we would be ſo ſenſible of his kindneſs, as to let Him

Him have a room in our hearts; and to receive from His hands ſo great a Good, as He offers to bleſs us withal. We feel thereupon only ſome inclinations to Him, and good affections for Him; but do not come preſently to a full reſolution to ſurrender our ſelves intirely to Him. Nay it is too manifeſt, that we are off and on (as the Phraſe is) and ſeem as if we could chuſe whether we will love Him or no. But when He hath once got within us, when we perceive how gracious the Lord is, and have opened our hearts to let Him dwell there; then He exerciſes an abſolute Empire over us. He will have none of His commands refuſed or diſputed. A ready and cheerful compliance with His Will, is the fruit of His Authority: and nothing can have a room there, but what ſhall ask Him leave. He rules and reigns over us in ſo ſovereign a manner, that He carries us whither He pleaſes. And more than that, it pleaſes us to be ruled by Him; and it is the moſt perfect liberty, to be under the uncontroulable power of his Love. All the World cannot hinder Him from being obeyed; but every ſignification of his will and pleaſure to us, becomes a Law

as ſtrong as Fate, which cannot be reſiſted. Let him ask what he will, it is ſufficient that he is pleaſed; and that he loves us ſo much, as to think of appearing again to make us perfectly like himſelf.

That's a Good incomparably great, which needs nothing to procure our love to it, but only to be known: And when it is loved, needs nothing to ſecure it, but not to ſlip out of our mind. Or rather we cannot forget, what we have once ſo dearly loved. The pleaſures of that paſſion are its preſervation. Its activity and force, will not let it dye or fall aſleep.

O come, come, ſaith a ſoul poſſeſſed with this Love, *for I cannot wiſh for any thing like thy appearing. It is impoſſible I ſhould refrain from deſiring that joyful day. I cannot live, but I muſt long for thy coming. O when wilt thou come, my bleſſed Redeemer? when wilt thou come? when ſhall we ſee that welcome morn, that ſhall bring the News of thine approach? It cannot but be moſt welcome ſure to all thoſe that have waited for it with ſo much patience, and*

cryed

cryed out ſo often, Make no long tarrying, O my Lord. *The brightneſs of thy face, I know, can throw no ſcorching flames into thoſe eyes that look for thee. That ſweet Sun will ariſe with a ſmiling countenance upon all ſuch hearts. They can never fear an evil day, when the Bridegroom comes, moſt gloriouſly deck'd, to compleat his love to them. And therefore I cannot but ſay again (and let all them that love thee, join their deſires with me, and ſay continually)* Come, come, O bleſſed Jeſus. *Come, while our hearts are warm with love to thee. Come, while theſe paſſionate ſighs are calling for thee. Come, now that theſe Souls ſtand open, with out-ſtretched arms to receive thee.*

What greater felicity can we wiſh, than to paſs away in ſuch aſpirations towards thee? What gentler or ſweeter breath, than theſe holy deſires, can waft our Souls into the Air to meet thee? Who can fanſie any thing more deſirable, than to evaporate, all together, in ecſtaſies of devout affections to thee? Happy were it for us, if our hearts were ſcrewed up to ſuch a pitch of love, that we needed no other inſtrument but that, to crack thoſe Strings that tye our Souls to our Bodies. Happy were it for us, if in ſuch

a fiery Chariot, we might be transported unto thy heavenly Mansions. We can conceive no greater pleasure than this, to expire in such ardent flames into thy bosome, there to rest for ever in thy love.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

All this shown to be the sense of the Holy Scriptures.

THUS have I put an end to the *third* enquiry about the nature of this *Love*, which S^t *Paul* supposes good Christians feel in their Souls to the appearing of Christ. In satisfying of which, I have not followed mine own fancy, but the common sentiments of all those hearts, who have so much good nature, as to know what this passion means. And there hath been nothing said, but what may be fully justified by the Holy Scriptures; if we diligently observe in what terms they speak of the passion and fervent desire, which all pious Believers have for the coming of our Lord.

I. For

I.

For which, they are, *first*, ſaid to LOOK or to *expect* it; with ſuch a greedineſs as men do that, of which they are extremely deſirous. So thoſe words Ἀπεκδέχεσθε and Προσδέχεσθε ſignifie, which are uſed in the 1 *Cor.* i. 7. iij. *Phil.* 20. ij. *Tit.* 13. ix. *Heb.* 28. where they are ſaid to *look* for the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; to have their converſation in Heaven, from whence they *look* for the Saviour; to be *looking* for that bleſſed Hope, the coming of Chriſt; who will appear the ſecond time to them that *look* for him: with that earneſtneſs, that is, and concernment, which one hath for the greateſt good in the World. Or with ſuch a longing (as I have explained it before) as the Children of *Iſrael* had to ſee their High-Prieſt return out of the moſt holy place; into which he went on the day of expiation, to make reconciliation for their ſins. For if he came out alive, it was a token that God had accepted him; and with the greateſt joy they received the bleſſing which then he brought and pronounced to them in his name.

There

There is a manifest allusion to this, in the last of those places now mentioned; *Heb.* ix. where the Apostle saith, *vers.* 26. that when Christ appeared in this World, it was *to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.* Which bloudy Sacrifice, as you read, *vers.* 24. He carried *not into the holy places made with hands (which were only Figures of the true) but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us*: that is, by virtue of this Sacrifice to perfect the expiation of our sins, and obtain for us the Divine Blessing. Now he being thus offered (vers. 28.) *to bear the sins of many* (as a publick Sacrifice, that is, for the whole body of mankind; not a particular, for one or a few persons) *unto them that look for him, he shall appear* (visibly) *the second time without sin* (as having made a complete expiation) to give *salvation* to his people, who expect his coming out of Heaven to bless them.

II.

Expect it, did I say? yea, this Apostle calls it a most *earnest expectation.* So the ἀποκαραδοκία *of the Creature,* viij. *Rom.* 19.

is expounded by *Oecumenius* * to be its exceeding intenſe and vehement deſire and expectance of the revelation of the Sons of God; that is, ſays he, of the concluſion of all, when it ſhall be clearly ſeen who are the Sons of God, and who the Sons of the Devil. Which is a Good to be wiſht for ſo much above all other, that the Heaven, the Earth, the Sea, the Air, the Sun, the Moon, all the viſible Creation; together with all that is inviſible, the Angels, Archangels, Powers, Principalities, Dominions; all theſe expect our perfection. They are the words of *Theodoret*, who (with other of the Antients) looks upon the whole Creation as brought in here, expecting our future happineſs, by ſuch a Figure * as the Prophets uſe, when they introduce the Woods rejoycing, the Mountains leaping, the Floods clapping their hands; to expreſs the exceeding great joy that ſhould be among mankind at the firſt coming of our Lord. But becauſe it is controverted what the Apoſtle means by *the Creature*, and this is not a fit place to diſcuſs it, I ſhall paſs by this expreſſion; and not mention the *ſighs* and the *groans*, which there follow, as the natural

* Ἐπὶ τὴν ἐναργῆ καὶ σφοδρὰν προσδοκίαν.

* Περσωποποιΐα ἡ τῆς τῶν ὅλων. Oecumen.

ral effect of an exceeding great deſire to ſee the day of redemption come.

III.

Let us rather conſider, that the Glory which ſhall be revealed, at the coming of Chriſt out of this holy place to give ſalvation to his faithful Worſhippers, is the cauſe, that, as S^t *Paul* ſpeaks in this place (which I have taken for the riſe of this Diſcourſe) they look for it, as a thing that hath very ſtrongly engaged their hearts, and is the object of their deareſt affection. They declare by the fixing of their eyes upon it, how much they love it; that is, eſteem it, are inclined to it, and think long till they enjoy it. For whatſoever touches us ſo nearly, we are wont to expect it with ſome impatience.

IV.

But as the Greatneſs of this Good is ſuch, as will make thoſe that believe it, earneſtly long for it: ſo it is able to quiet and ſtill their ſouls by the mere hope of its enjoyment; though it ſtay long before it come. And therefore,

(4.) they

(4.) they are ſaid to *WAIT for his Son from Heaven*, 1 *Theſſ.* i. 10. ἀναμένειν, *to tarry*, to *ſtay* till he come. Which implies both longing and patient abiding till he pleaſe to ſend ſo great a Bleſſing.

V.

Nay, *fifthly*, S^t *James* exhorts them to be PATIENT with long-ſuffering *to the coming of the Lord*, V. 7. For ſo the word μακροθυμήσατε, there uſed, imports; a patient abiding, though he ſtay long, and we ſuffer much, before he come. We could not ſuffer and endure what we muſt on ſome occaſions, if we did not expect him: (as *Oecumenius* notes out of the ancient *Greek* Expoſitors *) And our ſufferings would not be very valuable, if we were not content to expect him long, as he likewiſe obſerves upon another place in that Epiſtle. For if it were manifeſt, ſaith he, * that the *day of the Lord*, or the conſummation of all things, would be within three years, and it could not be otherwiſe, all would deſpiſe dangers and make nothing of them: ὅπερ ποίαν ἀρετὴν; and what great Vertue would this be, when they knew that within ſo ſhort a ſpace,

* In 1 Th. i. 10. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τοῦτον ἀναμένεσε, οὐκ ἂν τοσαῦτα ὑπομένεσε.

* In 1 Th. v. 1.

a ſpace, they ſhould receive their full reward? The Vertue of a Chriſtian is to ſuffer long, as well as to ſuffer much, waiting with long patience, as the Huſbandman doth for the precious fruit of the Earth.

VI.

And yet it is not ſuch a patience we are to exerciſe, but S^t *Peter* gives us leave *to HASTEN it*; which is a *ſixth* word whereby the holy Writings expreſs this pious affection unto, and vehement deſire of the appearing of Chriſt Jeſus, 2 *Pet.* iij. 12. *Looking for, and HASTING unto, the coming of the day of God.* In the Greek it is not *haſting unto the coming*, but *haſting the coming* (and ſo we render it in the Margine) that is, in our wiſhes, moſt ardent longings and gaſpings for it. For ſo that Phraſe is obſerved to be uſed by good Authors; in which σπεύδω τὸ σὸν ἀγαθὸν ſignifies *I wiſh thy good*: ſo heartily, that is, that I would make it fly hither, if I were able, as ſwift as my deſires.

Σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν.

VII. This

VII.

This declares the higheſt paſſion they had for it: looking upon themſelves as imperfectly happy, till they and their Saviour met together at his coming. Only they had a perfect hope of it, which was an exceeding great comfort to them. So S^t *Peter* alſo expreſſes it (which is the next word) *Hope to the end*; or rather (as the Tranſlation in the Margin renders the Greek τελείως ἐλπίσατε) HOPE PERFECTLY. And with very good reaſon; *becauſe of the grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. i. 13. There are great favours to be then beſtowed, moſt ample rewards to be diſtributed; which may juſtly make us value the hope of them, more than all the preſent poſſeſſions of this World; and rejoyce before we have them, that he hath given us ſuch ſolid, and firm grounds of hope one day to receive them. Which whoſoever underſtands, as he ought to live upon that hope, and ſupport himſelf with a perfect truſt in him that lives for ever to make good his promiſe: So he cannot but deſire

ſire and pray continually to ſee it accompliſhed.

VIII.

Which is the laſt thing, they cry unto our Saviour, and call upon him; beſeeching with fervent deſires that he would come. So ſome underſtand thoſe words xxij. *Rev.* 17. to be the voice of Chriſtian people, not inviting Strangers to come and embrace their Religion, but earneſtly inviting our Saviour Chriſt to come to perfect their happineſs. In this they all agreed, *the SPIRIT* (that is, Prophetical perſons, indowed with the moſt eminent Gifts of the Holy-Ghoſt) and *the BRIDE* (that is, the whole Body of the Church) with one conſent *ſay, COME.* And they exhort all others who ſhould read this, and receive Chriſtianity, to join with them in theſe Prayers; for ſo it follows, *Let him that heareth ſay, COME.* And let every Soul (that's their concluſion) who thirſts after Divine knowledge, eſpecially of future things, come and read this Prophecy; and partake of that refreſhment, that Water of Life, which is here freely offered to him.

But if that Verſe ſhould have another meaning; yet it is certain that S^t *John* himſelf (who was a fit Pattern to all thoſe who believe his Book) concludes all his Viſions with a Prayer to Chriſt that he would haſten his coming. For when our Lord had ſaid (v. 20.) *Surely I COME quickly*, He anſwers AMEN to this promiſe: and echoes back his own words to him, *Even ſo*, (let it be ſo) *COME LORD JESUS*. Thy word, is all our wiſhes. There is nothing ſo deſirable, as that thou would'ſt come and fulfil thy gracious Word.

It will be very fit then for us, who are come a great deal nearer to the day of the Lord, to deſcend down into our ſelves and ſee; what paſſions we have like to theſe, which were of old in Chriſtian breaſts. Let us call our ſelves to a ſtrict account, and examine whether we be in the number of thoſe thirſty Souls; that have this hearty affection for the appearing of Chriſt. It is ſafe for us to feel the Pulſe of our Souls; and by theſe tokens make a judgment of them, whether they beat Heaven-ward or no. What is it, may every one ſay to himſelf, what is it that I moſt admire, and holds the principal

cipal place in my esteem? Oh what is it, that I have fixt my mind, and set mine heart? What is the chiefest Loadstone of my affections, and whither doth the main current of them run? To what is it that my actions are addressed? What is my Hope, and the strength and support of my heart? If I might have my wish, what would I now see? The whole World fall down at my feet, to worship me; or all these things vanish and disappear before the Glory of the Lord Jesus, that we might go, and fall down, and worship His Majesty? What am I content to suffer and endure for this, though I stay long before I enjoy it? Hath patience had its perfect work; and do I rejoyce, though in tribulation, in hope of this Glory? Is this my satisfaction also, in the greatest fullness of worldly Goods; and are mine eyes, even then, ever towards the Lord? Am I still looking up unto Jesus; sighing for him and saying, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?* I can appeal to thee, that thou knowest there is nothing I so much long for, as that thou would'st come. O come, make haste to come; and satisfie the desires of thy Church, which have long cryed, *Come Lord Jesus.*

Let us not deceive our ſelves; this great Apoſtle hath pronounced a Curſe upon every one that loves not the Lord Jeſus, 1 *Cor.* xvj. 20. And he that loves Him, loves his appearing: and he that loveth his appearing, ſets his thoughts, his heart, his deſign ſo much upon it, as to contrive by all means (whatſoever become of him here) that, when Jeſus who is our life ſhall appear, he may appear with him in his Glory. Riches, Greatneſs, Pleaſures, Fame, Long-life, and all the train that waits upon them, are but as ſo many big names; loud, but empty, ſounds which ſignifie nothing to him; in compariſon with theſe exceeding great things, the COMING, the APPEARING, the KINGDOM and the GLORY of Chriſt Jeſus. The ſweeteſt Friend in this World, to whom he hath conceived the moſt paſſionate love, will not hinder him from ſeeking theſe: but rather by that love he will be excited to remember with what inexpreſſible affection he ought to purſue ſuch Divine enjoyments; not only for his own Soul, but for his ſecond ſelf. The beſt wiſh he can make for both is, that they may be carried with the ſame eager deſires

fires and hasty speed, to perfect their love in the incomparably greater joys and blessedness of Christs heavenly kingdom.

So great they are, that, having now finished all that was at first propounded to be considered on this Subject, this Love will not be content that I should here make an end. It being such a masterly affection, and governing the Soul so absolutely, as hath been related, will not suffer us to lay that presently out of our thoughts, which it hath once planted very deep in our hearts. It is one of its greatest pleasures, to think very much of that Good, whose Company it doth not yet enjoy: and, when it is far distant of it self, to make it present by a constant Image of it in the Mind.

And therefore it cannot be any wonder, if we bear a true love to the appearing of Christ, that it will not permit us to be willing to cease our Meditations, on so delightful an argument. It doth but act according to its nature, if it require us again to take another view of it; and spend a few more thoughts upon so bright and glorious an object. And happy were it for us, if it were nothing else but mere Love, that made me resume this Discourse

and begin it again; and that made those who read it to be willing or rather desirous to know further what are the causes of this heavenly affection, to the appearing of our Lord.

For that is it, wherein I intend to imploy the remainder of my thoughts, upon this Subject. Love is a passion that is very desirous to feel it self; and to be satisfied of its own sincerity, by the strength, and force, and restlesness of its motion. It fills the heart also with such a secret joy, that it would fain know the very Spring of all its delectable motions; and be led to the rise of every one of its desires and inclinations. Both the strangeness and the variety of its surprizing pleasures are so great, that our hearts cannot but be invited thereby to the very bottom of it; to see from whence it flows, as we perceive whither it tends. And therefore, as I have touched upon the general cause and reason of this passion of love in the foregoing part of this small Treatise: so it is not fit to deny it, in the following part, a brief consideration of the particular reasons, why it should be set upon the appearing of Christ.

And

And they may be reduced to these *two* Heads:

First, The great affection that all good Souls have for our blessed Saviour himself: And,

Secondly, The natural affection we all bear to our own good and welfare.

Which when we have considered, we shall be ashamed that we do not with greater fervour say, with respect to this, in our daily Prayers, THY KINGDOM COME: And be mightily excited to call upon our Souls more frequently, to meditate on *that blessed hope*, and *to look*, with much affection, *for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. Who will be so much honoured thereby himself, and then confer such upon us, as should make us long for the accomplishment of both.

CHAP. XI.

Reaſons for our Love to this Appearing, drawn from the reſpect we ought to have to our Lord himſelf.

AS for the firſt of theſe, the affection that is due to our Bleſſed Saviour, it ought to be ſtrong, you will eaſily confeſs, that Death it ſelf ſhould not be an equal match for it: That which conquers all things, ſhould it ſelf be conquered by this; and the King of terrors ſhould yield all his force, and yield himſelf a Captive to the love of the King of Love.

For ſince there is ſo great a power in hearty and unfeigned love, to beget love in thoſe to whom it is expreſſed; and ſince the love whereby our Lord attracts our affection, doth ſo vaſtly exceed all other: it is a prodigious obſtinacy or negligence,

ligence that the dulleſt and heavieſt ſouls are not drawn by ſo big a Loadſtone.

Do we not feel, as I have ſaid elſewhere, ſome motions of kindneſs in our hearts for the moſt contemptible Creatures; when they conſtantly fawn upon us, and follow us, and lye down by us, and will by no means leave us, but take our part if any Body aſſault us? Are we not much pleaſed with this affection they have to us, and concerned for their ſafety, and ready to reward them with tokens of our love to them? We muſt be Infidels then, or very inconſiderate and regardleſs of our bleſſed Saviour; or elſe find our hearts put into the greateſt paſſion, when we read, and ſeriouſly weigh the ſtrange expreſſions, which our Saviour hath made, of the moſt endearing love to us.

When we remember how he neglected himſelf, to ſerve us; how he indured hunger and thirſt, that we might be ſatisfied; how he gave the people the very Bread out of his mouth, and forgot to feed himſelf, that he might nouriſh them; when we ſee how he addreſſes himſelf untous; how he wooes and courts us (to ſpeak in our own language) with the greateſt

greateſt kindneſs to come to him; how ſolicitous he is for our happineſs; how he ſighed for us; how he groaned in Spirit to ſee men ſo obſtinate; how he ſweat; how he bled; how he gave his very life for us; and was content to be expoſed to the greateſt ſhame, rather than we ſhould periſh; what heart can be ſo inſenſible as not to be mightily affected with it, and to think of returning back his love, and that in ſome proportion to the wonderful Greatneſs of it?

But then, alas! it muſt be confeſſed that, we find, when our paſſion is ſtirred up, and our hearts begin to burn within us, we have little or nothing there, that is worthy of him. A Preſent we would fain make to him, but have none fit to be offered to ſo great a Majeſty. Nay, ſo void many times and empty are our hearts, of all that is good, that we may well be aſhamed to let him ſee them. Our thoughts are ſo dull, and the reſentments we have of his kindneſs ſo feeble and weak, that we our ſelves in whom they are, can ſcarce feel them. And at the beſt our affections are ſo ſmall, and ſo ſhort, that we cannot but bluſh to come furniſhed with no better oblation to him.

What

What shall we do in this Case? How shall we behave our selves with some due regard to his incomprehensible love? Love him we must; but love him as he is worthy, and as we would, we are not able. We cannot chuse but bring him our hearts, and yet we are sensible they are not worth the bringing.

We shall find our selves naturally inclined, in these circumstances, to do just as a grateful Poor man doth; who being unable himself to requite a Friends courtesies, rejoyces to hear that so very great a Person will take that care upon him. Or as the Divine Psalmist doth, who finding his own thoughts too short and low, calls upon the Angels, who excel in strength, to set forth the praises of him, whose name is highly exalted above all blessing and praise. That is, since we our selves cannot requite the benefits our Lord hath done us, nor worthily magnifie his Goodness towards us; we ought in all reason to be exceeding desirous that God, *the Father of Glory* (as Saint *Paul* calls him) would be pleased to reward his love, and make his praise glorious. Since there is nothing here whereby we can considerably honour him; we must needs

needs wiſh the day would come, when *the Bleſſed and only Potentate* will ſhow the reſpect he bears unto him.

As it is a joy to think that he is gone to the Father, and there is recompenſed for his ſufferings: ſo it is a matter of greater gladneſs, if we have any love for him, to remember that at his appearing (which he, who is able, will in due time ſhow) he ſhall ſtill be more magnified. This therefore all ſerious Chriſtians cannot but much deſire to ſee. For this they cannot but long extremely; and call with earneſt expectation for the coming of that joyful day. That, ſince they cannot laud and praiſe him enough now, the whole World may then be gathered together in one general Aſſembly, all Angels, and all Men, and with joynt conſent bow themſelves before him, and humbly acknowledge him to be the LORD OF ALL.

And here I ſhall take the liberty, for the clearer underſtanding of this, to give a diſtinct account, in a few Conſiderations, of that which, we may juſtly conceive, will accrue to our bleſſed Saviour by his glorious Appearing.

I. And

I.

And *firſt* of all, there is no doubt but, at his ſecond appearing, our Lord will be *publickly honoured*; and thereby have an amends made him, for the open ſhame and the publick diſgrace, to which he was here expoſed. No Varlet was ever uſed ſo baſely, as the World treated him; when he firſt came to viſit us in much humility. No man was ever the Subject of ſo much ſcorn, of ſo many ſorrows, and of ſo great pains as he endured. Would it not then be acceptable to you, to ſee his honour every where vindicated; his credit, as I may ſay, repaired; and his Glory made no leſs notorious, than his reproaches were?

Who would not wiſh to ſee that ſweet face (which by rude hands was ſo contemptuouſly blinded and buffeted) appear in an unveiled brightneſs; looking with the faireſt, the moſt beautiful and gracious eyes upon us? How is it poſſible to refrain from deſiring to ſee that countenance which was ſpit upon, and all beſpawled by the filthy mouths of wicked men; ſhining with rays brighter than

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the Sun, and gliſtering in the Glory and Majeſty of God the Father? Are you not impatient to behold that Head, which was inviron'd with Thorns, ſhow it ſelf with a Royal Crown upon it? Would you not fain ſee him as much admired, as he was deſpiſed; as highly praiſed and extolled, as he was vilely mock'd and flouted?

O that I might behold that time arrive (is every devout Lover of the Lord Jeſus apt to ſay) *O that I might be bleſſed with a ſight of that Glory and Honour, where-with, we believe, thou art already crowned! Thou waſt ſorely wounded and groſly abuſed, O dear Saviour, by thoſe whom thou cameſt to heal and to ſave. They barbarouſly ſmote and beſmeared thy holy face; they nailed thee to a Croſs; they pierced thy hands and thy feet; they thruſt a Spear into thy ſide and left thee all in gore; they condemned thee as the fouleſt Malefactor; and crucified thy Name and Reputation, as well as thy ſelf. And, which is worſe, how have thine own Followers grieved thee, and pricked thy very heart, by their baſe ingratitude to thee; who waſt pleaſed to be thus vilely uſed for their ſake?*

And

And what reparation, are the best among us able to make thee? What does it amount unto, that such poor Wretches as we can do for thee? How mean and inconsiderable is all the honour and all the praise that we, little and worthless things, can pretend to give thee?

O thou God of love, thou Father of mercies, we must address our desires to thee; and beseech thee, that thou wouldst be pleased to do it for us. Thou, who art the Blessed and only Potentate; who hast already appointed him to be Heir of all things; who hast given him a more excellent inheritance than the Angels; and when thou broughtest him into the World, didst command them all to worship him; finish, I beseech thee, according to the riches of thy Glory, the recompences thou hast begun to make him. Let me and all men else see how Thou lovest him, and what honour thou hast conferred on him.

Behold how this soul sighs out its desires to thee, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to hasten his Appearing; and to show him to the World in the Glory which thou hast given him. Let us all behold him as highly exalted, as he was lowly depressed and abased. Let us SEE HIM AS HE IS, *the Prince of Life,*

Life, the King of Glory. O perfect that which concerneth him. Let him come, and receive our universal acknowledgments. Let all Kings fall down before him, and all Nations serve him. Let them all call him blessed, and Heaven and Earth be filled with his Glory. Amen *and* Amen.

II.

They may well pray after this manner, and speak of his *perfecting*, that which is begun; because *(secondly)* till the Day of his glorious appearing, it is most certain, his Conquests will not be compleated over all his enemies. The very greatest of them will remain unsubdued, till he come then to tread them under his feet. Which cannot but dispose us to love that time above all other; because it will make him perfectly victorious.

He is sat down, saith the Apostle, at God's right hand (x. Heb. 12, 13.) *from thenceforth EXPECTING till his Enemies be made his Footstool.* Though he be highly advanced, that is, above all Creatures, yet all his enemies do not presently fall down before him: but he must stay some time before, not only all the adverse

verse Empires on earth submit themselves to him but, the Principalities also in the Air, and Death it self; which is the *last Enemy*, saith St *Paul*, *which shall be destroyed, and put under his feet.* He rules and reigns indeed; but still he hath many Opposers of his Kingdom. He waits likewise for their utter subversion and looks for their total ruine; but still they spoil and commit many wasts within his Territories. The Devil tyrannizes and rages in a number of places; and Death (as I must show anon) devours all.

How can we chuse then, but wait for that, of which he himself is in expectation? Where is our love to him, if we can cease to wish that all those Foes who despise or refuse his Government, were perfectly brought in subjection to him? Is there any thing more desirable, to those who pray seriously his Kingdom may come, than to see those put under his feet, who now proudly trample upon his Sovereign Authority? What more joyful sight can there be to them, than to behold the Devil, who now insults so insolently in his Dominions, despoiled of all his Power; and thrust down into the eternal Prisons and Chains of Darkness,

to which he is reserved? To say nothing yet, of the Glory it will be to him, to overcome Death it self, to which even all his Subjects are forced at present to submit.

O blessed Saviour (should all Christian Souls say, with one consent) *it afflicts us to hear thine Enemies roar in the midst of thy Congregation: to see them thus triumph and set up their Banners. And far more grievous it is to think, that we have ever been in the number of them; and given the least countenance and support to this Hellish Kingdom. The remembrance of it is bitter to us, that there was a time (Wretches that we were) when we were drawn aside to join our selves to this wicked Faction; and abett the Apostate Spirits in their rebellion against thee, their Sovereign Creator.*

But blessed be thy Goodness, thou hast overcome our disobedient hearts; and restored us to an happy accord with thee. We thank thee for it with all our Souls; and wish we might likewise see all Nations fall down before thee, and worship thee. What a joy would it be to see all the Kingdoms of

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the Earth, become the Kingdoms of thee, O Christ? What greater pleasure can our hearts desire? which are not able to express the satisfaction it would give them, to behold the Kingdom of Darkness, which is shaken already, falling flat upon the ground.

Overturn it, overturn it, O thou most Mighty, utterly overturn it. O come, and do that which we endeavour but cannot do. Come, and let us see thee vindicate thy self from the affronts of all thine insolent Enemies. Let us see all the Legions of Evil-Spirits, haled as Captives at the Wheels of thy triumphant Chariot. Let us see all the Powers of the Air flying away at thy presence, to hide themselves in the Pit of Hell for ever.

O thou who hast subdued us unto thee, subdue them likewise and bring them under thee. Thou who didst wrest us out of their hands, wrest from them all their power, and leave them none to get any more into their hands. As thou hast conquered; so we would gladly see thee triumph. As thou hast overcome; so we would fain see thee carried in magnificent and Royal State, as the most victorious LORD OF HOSTS.

Haste thee therefore, O sweet Saviour, to receive our Ovations. Come, that all the

World may give thee, the acclamations which thou deſerveſt. Why is thy Chariot ſo long in coming? Why ſtay the Wheels of thy Chariot? O that it would pleaſe thee to come, while our Souls are peeping out of their Windows to look for thee: while they call, and cry, and ſigh after thee: while they are full charged, with ſhouts and praiſes to beſtow upon thee.

III.

There is very great reaſon, you cannot but ſee, that they ſhould be thus deſirous of his appearing; becauſe, it is manifeſt, by what hath been now ſaid, it will bring along with it ſome addition of Glory to our Deareſt Lord.

If we had a Friend who was elected to be a King, ſhould we not often call for the day that would place him on his Throne? Or if he were ſeated there, but had ſome rebellious Subjects ſtill in Arms, in a Corner of his Country; ſhould we not be in ſome pain, till we ſaw his conquering Banners return with their ſpoils? Or, if that were done, and a time then prefixt for a ſolemn Meeting of all the Eſtates of his Realm, in the midſt of which

which he intended to ſit himſelf with the greateſt Pomp; ſhould we not think it long till we ſaw him ſhine there, and receive the homage of ſo many illuſtrious Perſons?

Tell your ſelves then, with what ardors you ſhould wait for the coming of your Lord. Who, though he be now Crowned, yet doth not for the preſent ſee all his Enemies ſubdued; nor appears, as yet, in the grand Aſſembly not only of the Angels and mighty men, but of all people whatſoever, who ſhall be gathered before his Majeſty.

It is true indeed, he being inthroned in the Heavens, ſits there in Royal Honour and Glory. But S^t *Luke* tells us (as you heard before, ix. 26.) that he will appear in the end of the World, not only in his *own Glory*, but in the *Glory of his Father* alſo: As if that were ſomething more, than what he hath already received at his right hand. That is, he will come from thence to judge the quick and the dead. Which will be an exceeding great Glory, ſuch an high honour as was never conferred upon any perſon whatſoever; to *have all judgment committed unto him*, and ſuſtain the very place of the Supreme

Lord and Governour of the World, to whom Men and Angels are accountable for their actions. This is a thing that is ſtill behind: and there are, it ſeems, ſome Royal Majeſtick Robes belonging to this high Office, which he hath not yet put on.

O how much ſhould we deſire to have Him clothed with them? How earneſtly ſhould we look, to behold him decked with that Majeſty, and arrayed in his moſt glorious attire? It ſhould not be enough to us, to believe that he reigns; but we ſhould long to ſee the laſt exerciſe, and the greateſt proof of his Kingly Authority: which is to judge the World in righteouſneſs, and to reward all men according to their Works.

O God, ſhould every true Chriſtian ſay, *who, according to thy faithful word, haſt glorified thy Son Jeſus, and committed all Judgment to him; haſten the day, when thou wilt complete the Glory thou haſt given him, and gather all Nations before him. Cloath him in the Glorious Robes of thy Majeſty; and let him appear in his Meridian brightneſs. Send him forth of thy Sanctuary;*

Sanctuary; and let him outshine the Sun in his strength.

O that he would shine forth, and shoot his Rays as far as this Earth. Let them not be confined to the highest Heavens; but let the Air and these inferiour Regions be all gilded with the splendor of his Beams.

O blessed Jesus, that we might behold thy light breaking out, to banish all this Smoak and disperse these Vapours, wherein we are inclosed. Let the Troops of thy holy Angels come, and expel those evil Spirits which have possessed themselves of these aerial places. Let thy glorious Throne be set there, where they have so long ruled.

Arise, and show thy self, O thou Judge of the World. Let them all know that they are subject to thy Tribunal. And sentence them to their proper habitations; that after thy appearing they may disappear, and never break loose to infest or trouble us any more.

Then will thy faithful Servants shout aloud for joy, and triumph in thy praise. They will sing a new Song before thy Throne, and magnifie thee in some such words as these:

Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the Sons of

lxxxix. Pſal. 6. xv. Rev. 3, 4.

the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name? For thou only art holy: All Nations are come to worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

IV.

And upon this account we ſhould be the more deſirous to ſee that Great Day; becauſe till then he will want the glory of having us and all his faithful Subjects, attend upon him in his heavenly Kingdom. It is a very ſmall glory indeed, you may be apt to think, that he can receive from ſuch poor things as we are. Who muſt acknowledge that we are unworthy, utterly unworthy of the favour to approach unto him: and if we ſhould be ſo vain as to think otherwiſe, deſerve to be baniſhed for ever from his bleſſed preſence. But when we remember how great his love is, and what he hath promiſed to do for us, we muſt likewiſe confeſs, to the Glory of his Grace, that He can and will raiſe us ſo much above our ſelves; that it

ſhall

ſhall be an honour to him to have ſuch Subjects, who by his Almighty Power are ſo nobly preferred. The magnificence and greatneſs of his Kingdom, will appear in the greatneſs and ſplendor of all his Friends and Followers. It ſhall be ſeen in them, what he is, and how highly God the Father hath exalted him; whom *he gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church: which is his Body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all.* i. Epheſ. 22, 23.

Certain it is he cannot be perfect (as he is the *Head* of the Church) without all his Members. In which regard ſeveral, both of the Greek and Latine Fathers, * think that his *Body*, the Church, is called his FULNESS; becauſe he will not be abſolutely compleated and conſummated, till all his Members be knit together in one Body, and joyned to him, in ſuch a Glory as is befitting thoſe that are ſo nearly related to him: who is able to communicate to them out of his fullneſs, what excellencies he pleaſes. This, ſays S^t *Chryſoſtom, is the hope of our calling*; (which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of before) *the riches of the Glory of the inheritance; the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe.* * *V. S. Chryſ. Oecumenium, S. Hieron.*

For

For whom he hath ſuch an affection, and loves us with ſo great tenderneſs; that he doth not think himſelf intirely happy, unleſs we be promoted to be with him where he is, and to reign with him for ever. So much is his heart ſet upon our advancement, that he accounts himſelf to be but in part glorious; till we be numbred among his Saints in Glory everlaſting.

Then will he ſhine in greater ſplendor and majeſty than ever; according to thoſe words of S^t *Paul* in another place, 2 *Theſſ.* i. 10. where he ſaith, *He ſhall come to be GLORIFIED in his Saints, and to be ADMIRED in all them that believe.* For, *firſt* of all, (as *Oecumenius* hath collected the ſenſe of the ancient Fathers about this buſineſs) it will be a Glory to him, that he hath ſo many Saints, to whom he will diſtribute his Goods, and make illuſtrious with him. For as his riches, ſaith he, is our ſalvation, ſo it will be a Glory to him. And *ſecondly*, He will be glorified alſo by his Saints, when they ſhall behold him ſitting ἐν τῇ πατρῴᾳ δόξῃ, &c. in his Father's Glory, the God and the Judge of all. And *thirdly*, We may add that the Saints will procure him Glory from the

the Spiritual Powers, when they ſhall ſee what a recompence of reward he hath vouchſafed to his Servants. Who as they ſhall give occaſion to his being *glorified*, ſo to his being *admired* alſo: becauſe it will be a moſt wonderful and amazing ſight to ſee thoſe, who are thought ſo vile and abject in this preſent life that they were perſecuted and murdered, accounted worthy then of ſuch and ſo great good things as he will beſtow upon them.

And truly, as our Lord will be thus magnified and admired at that day; ſo this ought now to be very wonderful in our eyes. Who have little conſideration, if we be not exceedingly in love with his appearing; when ſelf-love ſo ſtrongly inclines and prompts our affection to it. Can we find in our hearts to turn away our eyes from that, or ceaſe to long for it with ardent deſire; which Nature it ſelf calls for, as the greateſt Good? Here our own intereſt combines with his, to make us wiſh for that bleſſed day; which ſhall make him more illuſtrious, by the brightneſs of our Glory. Here two great Seas meet and run into one; to make our Souls ſwell and riſe up in bigger expectations of his happineſs.

Come,

Come, ſhould your heart and mine ſay, *come, O Bleſſed Jeſus; and at once make us and thy ſelf intirely glorious. Ariſe, O thou Sun of Righteouſneſs, and ſhed thy Beams ſo plentifully upon us, that we may ſhine with thee, as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father.*

Great are the things which are ſpoken of thy coming; when the exceeding greatneſs of thy power ſhall appear, to us-ward who believe, O come, and compleat thine own fullneſs: by filling us, out of thine exuberant Goodneſs, with all the bleſſings of thine heavenly Inheritance. Do not want that happineſs any longer; which will make us happy too, together with thee. Delay not to put on thoſe Kingly Robes; wherein when thou appeareſt, we ſhall be promoted to reign as Kings with thee for ever.

How will our raviſht Spirits then rejoyce, in that great ſalvation? How will they triumph, to ſee every knee bow to thine exalted Name! Nay, to ſee thee admired in us; when thou ſhalt exalt the honour of thy people, the praiſe of all thy Saints.

cxlviij. Pſal. 14.

O come, that the Greatneſs of thy Glory and Majeſty may appear in thy Saints;

and

and thy wonderful power, and love in all those that believe.

And till thou comest, let all thy Saints be joyful in Glory. Let them sing aloud in perfect quiet and repose. Yea, let the high praises of our God be in their mouth; who hath given us hope of Victory over all our Enemies. Let them never cease to praise him; who takes pleasure in his people, and will beautifie them with his Salvation. cxlix. 4, 5.

Praise him, who hath promised to come, and visit us in greater love than ever. Praise him who is the Head over all things to the Church; and will present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Let his name be alway engraven upon our hearts; who hath comforted us with the blessed hope, of seeing him in all his Glory. Let the memory of his transcendent love be ever most dear unto us; who intends to lift us up, to sit with him in Heavenly places. Let us never forget to rejoyce in his holy Name; with whom we expect to rejoyce in the highest happiness of endless Life. v. Eph. 27.

And, O blessed Jesus, that we may be so happy now, as to long for that day, on thy account, as well as our own. May it delight us to think, how thou wilt be admired

mired and highly praiſed, in our exaltation. Make us ſo much in love with thee, as to deſire to ſee our ſelves raiſed unto honour; becauſe it will make thee alſo appear in greater Glory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Other Reasons why we should love his Appearing, drawn from the love we have to our selves.

THUS I have made a fair way, to introduce the *second* thing which I propounded, for the compleating of this Discourse. Wherein I am to show, how the natural Affection we all bear to our selves, should powerfully dispose us to love the Appearing of our Lord Jesus. And this will admit of no less than these *TEN* Considerations: which will instantly, at the very first hearing, win our assent to the truth of them. For,

I.

First, We cannot but passionately desire, if we have any belief of this Appearing, to see so great an honour, as will then

then be done to our Nature. So great, that no Soul, who is poſſeſſed with a lively ſenſe of it, can be tempted any longer to envy the Greatneſs of the nobleſt Perſons; no, not the high dignity of the bleſſed Angels. The brighteſt of the Cherubims ſhould not be ſo grievous to us, as to hurt our eyes; nor the flames of the Seraphims touch us with the leaſt ſpark of indignation, to ſee our ſelves ſo much excelled by them: But we ſhould rather wiſh they were more glorious and illuſtrious; becauſe the greater they are, the greater will the advancement of our Nature be, which, at the appearing of Chriſt, will ſhine in a place ſo far above the higheſt of them.

Thoſe heavenly Creatures indeed are ſo ſplendid; that we, poor Mortals, even the holieſt of us, were wont to be afraid at their appearance. They are too glittering for our weak eyes to behold: too full of luſtre, for us, who dwell in theſe Caves of darkneſs, to converſe withal. Whence it was, that ſome pious people, in ancient times, preſently concluded they ſhould dye, if they ſaw an Angel: imagining that his buſineſs, when he appeared, was to fetch their Souls from their Bodies;

Bodies; in which while they lived, they were not fit for such Society. And other excellent persons were so amazed at the Glory of these Celestial Ministers, that they thought of paying them no less than religious honour; and prepared themselves to fall down before them and worship them as Gods.

O what an happiness then will it be, to see our Natures so improved and exalted; that we shall be able to entertain their Company, without any trembling at all: and instead of those paralytick fears, be only struck with a delightful sense of the most harmonious joys? What a Glory will it be unto us, what a joy, to find our selves made equal to those, whom we took for Gods? To behold our selves as bright as those Celestial fires; which were wont to dazzle the eyes of the greatest Souls, and possess them with an apprehension, that they were Divine Beings?

But especially we ought to consider, what an honour, what a satisfaction it will be, to behold, not so few as one, or two, or a thousand of those beautiful Creatures but, the whole Heavenly Court, (whom we were ready to adore) come

all with bended knees, and humbly proſtrate themſelves in the moſt profound adorations, at the feet of our ever-bleſſed Saviour, Chriſt Jeſus. Into what a rapture will it caſt us, to behold our Nature ſo advanced; that all the Gods ſhall approach and worſhip the ſame Jeſus, who was ſo debaſed and abuſed? A moſt glorious and delightful ſight it will be, to behold him in the Head of all thoſe Heavenly Hoſts: to ſee all the Air filled, with the ſeveral Legions of holy Angels: to behold every Troop in that glorious Camp, paying their reſpect to our far more glorious Lord; and with their ſhouts and joyful acclamations following him, as their General and chief Commander: And all the Powers of Darkneſs likewiſe crouching at his feet, quaking at his Majeſtick Preſence, diſarmed of all their Weapons, and confeſſing themſelves the Captives and Slaves of this victorious Prince, Chriſt Jeſus.

O my ambitious deſires, where are you? What is become of you, O my aſpiring thoughts? You that uſed to be ever climbing aloft, and perpetually heaving up my heart;

heart; whither are you gone, or into what dullness are you now sunk down? What is the matter that you lye asleep; when so fair an object presents it self to awaken and rouze you up? What ails you, that I do not feel you stir; who were wont, with less temptations, to be all on fire?

Is there any thing we can reasonably thirst after with so much ardor, as to have all the World behold us made the Companions of Angelical Natures? What is there that you can fansie a higher Glory, than to see this Flesh of ours taking place of the Heavenly Spirits? To behold all the Armies of Heaven and Earth, waiting upon the supreme Judge of the World, the Man Christ Jesus?

Get up then, get up, and pray perpetually that this most blessed time may come. Rouze up your selves, and in your most passionate wishes, fly before-hand thitherward. Let this be the Butt at which you shoot, the Mark at which you always aim, O my winged thoughts, and hasty desires. Let this be the end of all your labours, O my busie and restless powers. And content your selves in any condition, till this most happy state shall come. Live upon this joyful hope. Cheer up your selves with these

moſt comfortable expectations. They cannot be utterly miſerable, no, they muſt needs be very happy whatſoever their troubles be, who look for ſuch an incomparable Glory.

Rejoyce therefore, and more than that, make your boaſt in this perpetually; that one day Angels themſelves, who are out of the reach of our preſent calamities, ſhall not excel you: But if there be any difference, it ſhall be only ſuch as was between the men of Judah, *and the men of* Iſrael, *(at the bringing back of King* David *to his Throne) that you ſhall be able to call this great* Son of David, *BONE OF YOUR BONE, AND FLESH OF YOUR FLESH, when the higheſt Angels can challenge no ſuch intereſt in him.*

O moſt bleſſed Hope! the Staff of our Life; the ſtay and the ſtrength of our Hearts! The ſecurity of the happy, and the ſanctuary of the afflicted! that which preſerves our joys from becoming ſowre, and which ſweetens the bitterneſs of all our miſeries! Our Reſt, our Peace, our higheſt Satisfaction!

It is enough that I am Owner of ſuch a glorious Hope. Be thou ever in mine eye; be thou ever in my heart. I will walk, and

and labour all the days of my life in this holy Hope. And I will lye down at last in hope; that Thou who now sendest down thy Angels to minister unto us, wilt call us up unto thy self, and make us to sit with thee in those Heavenly Regions.

O come, come, Lord Jesus, that we may be all so happy. And till thou comest, descend sometimes into this heart, which loves thee and longs for thee: and lift it up unto thee, in more ardent desires, earnest endeavours, and holy hopes: to see thy Glory, and to appear in Glory together with thee.

II.

It will be very strange, if we believe in Christ, and be not possessed with these desires; when we attend to the secret inclinations there are in every one of our hearts, to wish we might be blessed with the sight of him, who is so lovely, and who hath loved us so much; whom hitherto our eyes have never seen.

For did any Body ever hear of a most excellently accomplisht person, full of the most obliging kindness to him, and that had infinitely merited of him, and designed all the honour in the World for

him; and not feel a moſt paſſionate longing deſire burning in him, to behold the face of this Great man, who had an heart ſo tender, ſo noble, and ſo graciouſly affected towards him?

This is our caſe; who live in theſe remote places and Ages of the World, and have heard indeed, with the hearing of the ear, of Chriſt Jeſus our Deareſt Saviour; and of his incomparable love; and of the honour he hath done us, and ſtill intends to do us: But have not yet been ſo happy, as to have our eyes entertained, much leſs ſatisfied, with the bliſsful ſight of him; as theirs were who lived near him, and converſed with him at his firſt appearing. If we had any hope therefore of his appearing again, though in leſs ſplendor than I have told you, we could not but look up unto Heaven, where he lives, with earneſt expectations, and ſay, When will he come, when will he come, and manifeſt himſelf viſibly unto us? Becauſe, as yet, we know nothing of him but by the report of thoſe, who had the honour to be EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.

We have been told by them that they ſaw this amiable and gracious perſon, and clearly

clearly discerned that he was *God manifested in the flesh*. They have assured us that he was born of a spotless Virgin; that his name was *Jesus*; that he was acknowledged the Son of God, by voices from Heaven, and by the descent of the Holy-Ghost in a visible manner upon his Head; and yet that he was contented to become poor and mean, that he might inrich us; to suffer his hands, and his feet, and his heart to be pierced, that he might heal our wounds: yea, we have heard that he descended into the lowermost parts of the Earth for our Salvation; and that he rose from the dead again after three days; and that he ascended up on high, and now sits at the right hand of the Father; and will come again to judge the World, and to take up his faithful Servants unto himself.

And most comfortable news all this is, which hath arrived at our ears; and we must needs with all thankfulness dutifully acknowledge, that we are marvellously beholden to the Almighty Goodness, which hath taken such care to perswade and fully assure us of its truth. But still every pious heart that sincerely and ardently loves Him is apt to say;

When will he come again; that then we may ſee, as now we believe, the certain truth of all this; which we have heard of him with our ears? When ſhall we be ſatisfied by ſuch evidence as the Apoſtles, and other of his Attendants had; who beheld his perſon, and ſaw his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth? *May not we alſo hope to be as they were,* Eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty?

O when will his holy Angels deſcend unto us, and ſay, as they did to them; Come, and ſee that he is riſen? When ſhall we hear a voice from Heaven, ſaying; Come up hither, and behold my beloved Son, in whom I am ever well pleaſed? When will the Trump of the Archangel ſound; and proclaim in all our ears, that he is Judge of quick and dead? O how many days muſt we ſtay and wait, before we riſe again, to aſcend up to him where he is? How long will it be, before we leave this Earth, to behold him exalted at the right hand of the Majeſty on high?

O moſt gracious Saviour, who haſt done ſuch great things for us; Come, and let us ſee that thou art alive, and ſtill loveſt us! Come, and put us out of all doubt, that thou liveſt for evermore! Let us behold thoſe bright,

bright, those loving eyes, which wept so oft, and with so much kindness over us! Let us see that sweet, and now most glorious face; which sweat as it had been drops of blood for our sake! Stretch forth those hands, that were wounded in our service; O stretch them out, to lay hold on us, and lift us up to the vision of thee! Do not long defer, before thou lettest us enjoy, what we now believe. Make no long tarrying, O blessed Lord, but turn the faith of thy servants into sight. And by thy second appearing, be pleased to make us as sure, as thou didst those, who then lived, by thy first.

We are perswaded that the fame of those things which we wait for, is nothing comparable to the sight of them. We cannot but think that all present reports fall far short, infinitely short of future enjoyment. Thy type, the great Solomon, *O Lord, puts us in mind of thee, and makes us more desirous to see thee. We would fain go, like the Queen of* Sheba, *from these furthermost parts of the Earth; that we may stand before thee in thy heavenly* Jerusalem. *Not the half, we believe, of thy Magnificence hath been related to us. No, not the shadow of thy Glory and Majesty hath been brought to these far distant Climates; where we hear little or nothing of thee. Nay,*

Nay, we believe we cannot now understand thy Greatneſs, if it ſhould be all relato us. If we ſhould ſee thee as thou art, in thy Royal Apparel, on the Throne of thy Glory, with all thy Heavenly Attendants and noble Miniſters round about thee; there would be no more ſpirit left within us. *We ſhould faint away under the weight of that ſight; unleſs thou, O Lord, wouldſt disburden us of this fleſh, and make us become all Spirit.*

And that's the happineſs indeed, which we deſire; and groan in Spirit till we enjoy. There is no greater good we can wiſh, than to be caught up from this Earth; and have eyes beſtowed upon us, bright and ſtrong enough to behold thy Majeſty. We cannot but long for this; that we may ſtand in thy preſence, and be ſatisfied with thee: that we may ſee thee, who haſt loved us, and given thy ſelf for us: thee whoſe love hath won our hearts, and conducted us thus far in our way towards thee: thee who art our hope, and with whom our life is hid: That we may ſee thee, O Lord, in the height of thy Glory, and thy face may ſhine upon us, and our eyes ſparkle for joy with the light of thy Countenance: Of which we are the more deſirous, becauſe we

never

never yet had the favour to ſee thee, who art ſo dear unto us.

O favour us therefore ſo much, moſt gracious Lord, as to come and gratifie our deſires, with that unknown, that long-lookt for ſight of thee.

III.

And there is ſtill a greater reaſon to deſire it, and to be in love with his appearing; becauſe then we hope to be perfected and conſummated in Love.

This is an affection, you have heard, ſo pleaſurable; that we are inticed thereby, or rather ſweetly forced to ſtrain our Souls to the utmoſt expreſſion of it. When we have found an object worthy of this paſſion, the delight it gives us invites, nay compels, our hearts to the moſt abundant effuſion of it; that ſo we may not want the higheſt degree of delight and joy.

But Alas! Love in this World, though exceeding ſweet, is not, as we uſually ſpeak, all Honey; but there is ſome bitterneſs mingled together with it. The heart that is ſtruck with it receives a wound (which cannot be perfectly heal-

ed

ed till it enjoys its desires) and that you know is not without the company of anguish and pain.

1. For we find that when men admit into their hearts the love of any mortal Creature like themselves, the Soul which before was whole, unbroken and intire, is as it were separated and torn by this passion, both from it self and all other objects; save only that which hath engaged its affection. Now all men know that no heart can be thus parted and divided, without a sense of grief and smart, attending on such a divulsion and rending of it from it self: till it feel that Soul, which it loves as another self, effectually joyned to it.

And then (2.) we find that after it hath obtained well-assured hopes of this; yet those eager desires and longings that are in this passion, still carry their sting in them; and make the heart but ill at ease until they be accomplished. Both which it were easie to apply to that devout affection, wherewith pious Souls are touched towards our blessed Saviour; which is very unquiet and full of trouble, till they know and feel that he loves them.

3. But

3. But I shall rather observe (which is peculiar to this holy love) that the wounds, as I may call them, which are made in any heart by the wonderful kindness of our Saviour, who loved us so much as to dye for us, are wont very oft to be a torment to it; because it can love him no more, and doth not feel such vehement transports of affection to him, as it desires, and he hath merited.

And then (4.) though we are fully perswaded that we do sincerely and heartily love him; yet this proves a great trouble to us, here in this present state, that we fansie him sometimes to be a Stranger to us; and he seems to treat us, as if he were suspicious of our Love.

And (5.) when we have the greatest sense of his most tender mercies, and he sheds abroad his love in our hearts; This creates a new grief, because he stays no longer with us, and we cannot call him back, as oft as we please, to give us those delicious tastes of his infinite Love.

But (6.) there is nothing so considerable in this matter, as that we cannot enjoy those gracious visits from our Lord (of which we are so desirous, and which fill

fill the heart with the greateſt love to him and delight in him (but they conclude in ſighs and groans, and leave us much unſatisfied, while we are in this mortal Body. That very love which God himſelf excites, thoſe Heavenly impreſſions which his own hand makes upon our hearts, the greateſt ardors of Divine affection wherewith we are inſpired from above; are not without their pangs of trouble in all thoſe, who with earneſt intention of mind and moſt hearty deſires, give up themſelves to follow them, and ſeriouſly endeavour to comply with them.

For while a devout Soul (that is in a lively manner touched by him) ſtretches its wings, as I may ſay, and ſpreads it ſelf with great affection that it may mount up in vehement love unto him; It preſently feels how unable it is to anſwer thoſe Divine motions, and ſees, to its ſorrow, that its wings are not grown large enough, to bear it ſo high, as it then aſpires. There is a powerful ſpirit indeed, which ſtimulates it to fly aloft, where he is; but while it endeavours to obey its inſpirations, it is ſtrongly dragged and pulled down by the Earthly tabernacle,

to

to these inferiour enjoyments. It is born away with violent and swift desires; and at the same time sinks below, and sadly flaggs for want of power.

Like the Bird that is not yet fully fledg'd, which would fain fly when it hears the Mother call; but finding its wings too weak, is forced to fall into some hedg or tree, and there is content to hop up and down, and please it self in its little chirpings among the branches: so doth the devout soul feel it self when it is very desirous to correspond with the heavenly motions that are stirring in it; and when it thinks it hears the Father of Spirits, saying, Come up hither. It fails in the attempt, and can only make some small, but feeble, essays towards its celestial Country. It is soon tired and grows weary; and while it pants and breathes after high and excellent things, cannot reach them or come nigh them: but faints away and spends it self in sighs, which are so much the sadder; because it sees the spacious Heavens before its eyes, and yet must be content to drop down and sit still upon the Earth.

Yea, the very stretching of her wings puts the Soul to pain, when she cannot fly.

fly. The ſtraining of her ſelf is very uneaſie; when ſhe can only groan, but not raiſe up her ſelf to the pitch that ſhe deſires. She ſuffers a kind of torment between theſe two; the ſtrength of her affections, and the weakneſs of her ability; the ſharpneſs of her ſight, and the dullneſs of her enjoyment.

O miſerable Creature that I am, what ſhall I do? (is the dejected Soul in this caſe apt to ſay.) *Pardon me, Dear Lord, if my great love to thee make me call my ſelf miſerable; when I know that I am very happy. It is my deſire to be nearer to thee, which makes me deplore, not only my diſtance from thee but, the feebleneſs of my Soul in its endeavours to approach thee.*

O what a change have a few moments made in me! I thought juſt now I was going up to Heaven; and Alas! here I lye at this preſent ſighing upon the ground. The Divine breath, methought, was carrying me above; and I, unable to accompany it, am ſtill here below. I felt as if I was all life and ſpirit a little while ago; and now I am almoſt dead. I ſeemed as if I ſhould have quite forgot this World; and now I can ſcarce think of any thing elſe.

O how

O how sweet would it be, but to remember the tastes that I had of thy transcendent love! whereas now, alas! I can scarce relish any thing that is good. What shall I do with my self? Or what shall I desire for this poor soul, which is thus sadly burdened, and pressed down by the corruptible body?

My heart is with Jesus; but, O how little do I enjoy of him? I am not my self, I am become another thing than I was before; and yet how little is there of Jesus in me? How wide is the distance still, between me and my deareſt Lord? How do I long to be exactly like him, but how short, O how vastly short, am I of him? And how like a Stranger doth he sometime seem? How do I lose, in this blind and dark estate, the sight and sense of his most precious love? I know my heart loves him; but what a grief is it, that my love is so weak, so dull, so little worthy of him?

O blessed Jesus, what a favour is it, that thou wilt be pleased to cast, at any time, a gracious look, upon such a cold and senseless heart as this of mine? With what thanks ought I to receive, the smalleſt testimony of thine inestimable love? Which is so sweet, that it makes us sigh because we can enjoy no

more of it. Ah! that this Veſſel ſhould be ſo narrow and ſtrait, as to contain ſo little of thy love! Ah the dullneſs of this heart, which entertains thee ſo poorly; that it is no wonder thou makeſt ſo ſhort a ſtay, ſo exceeding ſhort a ſtay with me! How ſad is it to think of this heavy Clog, which will never let me follow thee far; when I have the ſtrongeſt attractions from thee?

Fain would my Soul climb up unto thee; but when I have got a little way, down I come, and have loſt that glorious ſight I had of thee. And if thou art pleaſed to lift me up as high as Heaven; how ſoon is the mind weighed down again, while it muſeth upon thoſe Celeſtial things? O the conſtant joys which I hoped to have! how are they vaniſhed? O the ſatisfaction which began to be in this heart; which now lies groveling in the duſt, filled with nothing but ſighings after thee?

And bleſſed be thy Goodneſs, that it doth ſigh after thee. I thank thee that I feel ſuch love, ſuch vehement deſire there, as makes it long for more of thee. I will never ceaſe to ſigh after thee. I will ſtill long for that time, when thou, Lord, wilt be pleaſed to appear, and make all ſighing fly away, by a conſtant ſight and enjoyment of thee. For this I will

groan,

groan, that I may be so happy as to see thee; and that thou wilt make me as strong, as sometime thou makest me desirous, to accompany thee. I will pray for this, that thou wouldest come, and heal those wounds which love hath made; by making me perfect in thy love.

O come therefore, Dearest Lord, and turn my desires into enjoyment, my sickness into health, my weakness into strength, these flutterings of my soul into a flight: into a flight, I say, from this Earth into the Air: where I may no sooner wish to be with thee, but I may feel my soul snatcht away, and leap for joy to find it self in thy embraces.

Come, O my Lord, come thou Lover of Souls, and let me not languish in these longings any more. Come, and leave no place for any fears, that I shall lose thy company. Come, and give me the full satisfaction I promise my self in thy sweetest Society. I am content to suffer one pain, that I may thereby put an end to all. Death is no longer dreadful to me; when I think it will bring me something nearer to thee. Thou mayst rend my soul when thou pleasest from this flesh; that it may be torn no more, as it uses to be, when it is pulled back by other things, and would gladly follow thee.

O joyn me perfectly, most perfectly to thee; that I may love thee as much, as the most enlarged spirit is capable to love thee. Happy should I be, if I could do nothing else but love thee, and feel that thou lovest me. O hasten the day, when my time shall be divided between these two sweetest employments; of expressing my most ardent love to thee, and rejoycing in the full satisfaction of thy love to me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Two other Reasons why, if we love our selves, we must needs love this Appearing.

IV.

SO we ought to wish, if we seriously believe there will be such a day, because we naturally love *Life and Immortality*, which till then cannot be perfectly bestowed on us. Our Lord indeed hath brought these to light, and given us an assured hope that none of those who believe in him shall perish: But as the everlasting Life he puts us in possession of when we depart from hence (I shall show in the next Chapter) is not presently compleated; so it is out of all question that we must stay till the *last day* before he perform his so frequently repeated promise, of raising our Bodies out vj. Joh. 40. 54, &c.

of the duſt, and making them incorruptible, that they may live for ever.

Which is a thing we ſo much deſire, that we are prone to pleaſe our ſelves with the mere ſhadow of it; ſtudying, when we dye, to make our memory ſurvive our Aſhes. We would fain record our Names in the Legend of fame, by the performance of ſome remarkable exploit. Or by ſome memorable work, we contrive that the World may ſpeak of us, when we are gone down into ſilence. And for fear it ſhould not, we teach Marble-ſtones, and Pillars to tell what we were; and by this means we fanſie we ſhall live as long as the world ſhall laſt.

But Alas! this is no better than an imaginary life; which we cannot ſecure neither: but muſt leave the World without any aſſurance of that, for which we are ſo ſolicitous, and employ ſuch ſerious pains. No man's Name can be ſo loudly ſounded by the trumpet of fame; but it may chance that ſucceeding Ages ſhall not hear the leaſt whiſper of him. Or if they do, it may fare with him as it doth with *Hercules* and *Bacchus*, who were as great Souldiers and Conquerors, it is likely, as *Alexander* and *Ceſar*, and yet now their

their notable atchievements do but serve to fill up the number of Fables. Epitaphs, and Escutchions, Books and Monuments, do all dye as well as men. Our Names in all likelihood will at last be buried and perish, as well as our selves. For this World is the place, where Death reigns and plays the Rex; not only over us, but over all the reliques that we leave behind us.

What should we wish for then, what should be the ardent desire of all Nations, if they were Believers, but the time of our Lord's Appearing: *when this mortality*, as the Apostle speaks, *shall be swallowed up of life*; and we shall receive from his hands Laurels and Crowns, that are incorruptible and never fade away; a Name that shall never dye; a Glory, that shall live and continue in its splendor, as long as God himself? For as this is the time wherein Death hath dominion; so that will be the time of abolishing its Kingdom, and putting an end to all its tyranny, by setting up Life and Immortality in its stead.

O welcome time, says the heavenly-minded Soul, *when this great Devourer of the World shall have nothing left to feed upon; unless it be the Grave, which shall dye eternally, and never be heard of more! O what a joyful name is this of Life, and of Life for evermore! How sweetly doth, even the word, IMMORTALITY sound, in this land of death and destruction? What is it that makes our hearts so cold, and to feel so few desires to see the Prince of Life appear? To see Him, who shall raise up that in Glory and Power, which was put into the Earth in dishonour and weakness; and shall turn this natural, this corruptible Body, into one that is spiritual and incorruptible?*

Are we afraid this World will be burnt up by the brightness of his appearing? Do we pity our Palaces and costly Furniture, which we think are then in danger to be consumed? Are we concerned for our Money and Jewels, our ancient Demesn and places of pleasure, our Pictures and Statues, with such like things, which we strive to perpetuate to all Posterity? Will all these, do we fear, be in a flame? and serve for no

other

other use than those great Fires do, wherewith we honour the Coronations and Victories of Kings, or any other such like noble spectacle?

Let it be so; I see no cause to be troubled at it: when I remember that together with these, the Graves and the Sepulchres, the Tombs and such like Monuments of Deaths Conquests, the Vaults and the Charnel-houses, with every other Trophee that sin hath erected, shall be cast into this huge Bonfire; which shall be made, we conceive, by the conflagration of this Globe of Earth, to adorn our Saviour's Triumph.

Why should we dread, O my Soul, to behold such Flames as these? Let us look and fix our eyes upon them as most cheerful Blazes. Let us warm our hearts, at the very thoughts of such Fires. And though they should prove to be this Worlds Funeral; yet let us rejoyce in them as accompanying our most happy Resurrection.

O Death, I fear none of thy threatnings. O Grave, I am not astonisht any longer at thy darkness. I see the fatal day is coming, which shall put an end to both your dominions. And till then, I yield my self your Subject, and intend not to struggle against your power. But I fear it not: because, unless

less you can prevent that day, or prevail against my Saviour, as well as over me, I am safe enough.

It is not much you can rob me of at present. The pleasures we enjoy in this crazy Body, are not so considerable, that we should mightily lament the loss of them. Our Friends indeed have taken such fast hold of our hearts, that we cannot easily consent to leave them: but setting them aside, what is it that you can take away, which I am loth to part withal? And they, I consider, shall at last triumph together with me, over your now prevailing power. We shall only part, to meet again, and see you swallowed up in victory. And we shall be revived in Bodies far more glorious, with hearts full of more vigorous love. In which we shall live with endless pleasure; without any fears of being severed any more. Amen.

I wish thou wouldst come, O blessed Jesus, and carry us all to a place of secure and peaceful love: where we might sit together, and chaunt thy praises for ever.

V.

We cannot but be inclined to such meditations, and bear an affectionate love to our

our Lord's Appearing, unless we be in love with Sin; which at that time (we should further consider) shall quite cease, and not have so much as the least shadow of it remaining.

Are not all pious Souls very much afflicted, to think that God is every where so much dishonoured? Is it not exceeding grievous to them, to see his most high Authority daily affronted, without any remedy for it? and that Image he hath placed of himself in man, after such a lamentable manner, and without any remorse, continually mangled? Nay, is it not a considerable part of their trouble, that they are afraid lest, through the violence of temptations, or the weakness of their nature, or the inadvertency of their minds, by sudden surprizes, they should add to the number of those disorders which are already so prodigiously increased? What is there then, for which they can more reasonably wish, than that they may be delivered out of this fearful danger, and the Heavens may be secured from this rude violence?

A Blessing to be desired and expected not only upon their own account, but in respect to our blessed Lord and Saviour

our alſo, who is now, we read, in the moſt holy place above, there preſenting himſelf, with his precious blood, before God for us. Which he muſt continue to do, till the time of his Appearing be fulfilled; when he ſhall come out from thence *without ſin* (ix. Heb. 28.) as having diſcharged all his Office in that heavenly Sanctuary. While he ſtays therefore in that place, the care of all the people lies upon his ſhoulders: there is a daily charge he is to attend; that he may cure and expiate the ſins of men. This is the conſtant employment of his high and Royal Prieſthood, and it cannot ceaſe till he come out again, on the day of his appearing: which, it is manifeſt, will free both him and the World from this great burden of tranſgreſſions.

Then there ſhall never be any more objects of his pity and compaſſion. He ſhall have no ſenſe then of our infirmities; no feeling of our pains, our grief and our anguiſh. Then he will ceaſe to be afflicted with us, and be put to no further trouble about us: But be all delight, all joy, all complacence and pleaſure in his members; who will be ſo well, as to call for none of his care any more for ever.

And

And ſhall not the thoughts of this bleſſed time be our joy and pleaſure too? We have very much reaſon to ſuſpect our Faith, if we can find ſuch contentment here, that we would not have it make too much haſte: For nothing is ſo ſad to pious hearts, as that it ſeems to be ſo far off, and comes ſo ſlowly to them. They groan and ſigh here under many weakneſſes. They complain moſt heavily, and mourn under the weight of many imperfections. From which they would fain be delivered; that they may turn their ſighs, into Songs of praiſe to the triumphant Captain of their ſalvation, Chriſt Jeſus.

Nay, ſhould we ſuppoſe there will be a time, before the end of all things, when righteouſneſs will more univerſally prevail; which is the beſt ſenſe that can be made of the Saints reigning upon the earth with Chriſt a thouſand years (which ſome are perſwaded is ſtill to come:) Yet ſuch and ſo many are the weakneſſes that will hang upon us, and ſo great are the dangers to which they will make us ſubject, while we dwell in theſe earthly Tabernacles, that Good men would but be the more deſirous our Lord would appear,

appear, to perfect what they saw so happily begun, in their intire reformation to a better state.

O what a long time am I like to stay, cries such an oppressed Soul, *before I be eased of this burden, which is too heavy for me? How many days and years more must I spend, under the load and pressure of this flesh and blood? Give me patience, Dear Lord, to wait for that day, which shall free me from it. Make me able to support my self in contentment, with the hopes that the time of release, at last will come.*

I am so far from being unwilling that thou shouldest come; that I beseech thee to make me willing to stay, till thou canst come. Only give me leave sometime to sigh and say, when wilt thou come! O when wilt thou come! Suffer me to wish most passionately that thou wouldest appear: Be not angry with me, if in the agonies of my soul I desire thou wouldest haste thine appearing.

And in the mean time, encrease my belief, that thou, O compassionate Saviour, pitiest my weaknesses, and art not insensible of all my miseries: that so I may more comfortably hope, thou wilt come and ease me

and

and thy self, both together. Bear up my sinking spirit, till I be so happy: and by thine Almighty Power support me under the weight of all the fears and all the doubts that are apt to trouble me. And let not the dullness of my mind, or the heaviness of my heart, the distraction of my thoughts, or the deadness of my affections in thy most delightsome service, utterly deject me. But raise me up with a cheerful hope of thy salvation, to a pitch of joy and gladness, under all the burdens that oppress me.

I am forced indeed to sigh, when I think of the many temptations to which, on every side, I am exposed. And more sad it is to think that they, at any time, have shaken, though not overthrown me. O the childish follies of a mind, which doth so much as listen to the treacherous allurements, which would steal away my heart from its happiness! O the intolerable weakness of an heart, which doth so much as waver in its resolved choice, of so reasonable a service as that of thine, wherein I am engaged!

Pardon me, Good Lord, that I call it intolerable. For I know I ought to bear it in hope of greater strength and of eternal settlement: and that I ought to rejoyce I am not overcome, by all the temptation, where-

with

with I have been assaulted. Blessed be thy Almighty Grace, that I have stood hitherto so stedfast, so unmoveable in my duty: and that I have thy word for it, thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me. It is only my love to thee, which makes me complain, though not of the inconstancy yet, of the weakness of my love. The coldness of my affections, the listlessness of my devotions, my aptness to be tired and soon weary of the Divinest pleasure and satisfaction, the unevenness of my temper, the sudden discomposures I feel in my spirit, are the things that often trouble me.

But I ought to remember that I am now in a Body full of disorders: and that my life is a warfare which I ought patiently to accomplish. And I have great reason to bless thy name, O thou most glorious Conqueror of the Devil and sin, by whose gracious aids, my will standeth firm, and doth not yield or in the least consent to displease thy Majesty. By thy Power I have and shall do valiantly. Thou shalt still tread down all mine Enemies. My Soul shall make her boast in thee, O Lord, and be glad in thy salvation. For I am continually with thee: who hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy coun-

sel,

ſel, and afterward receive me to Glory.

Thus will I always hope in thee, if thou wilt but be pleaſed mercifully to bear with my incurable infirmities; to relieve my fainting ſpirit, in this tedious Pilgrimage; and to permit me to ſigh ſometime and ſay, O when will this long conteſt be ended! when will this War which my paſſions raiſe in my breaſt be concluded; and ſuffer me to live in tranquillity and enjoy the ſweeteſt pleaſures of perfect peace! Yea, when ſhall all thine Enemies throughout the World be diſarmed! and there be no more rebellions againſt thy moſt Sacred Authority and thy Soveraign Will.

O come, ſweet Jeſus, come, thou Lord of peace; get thy ſelf and us the Victory: that we may be more than Conquerors, and triumph in thy praiſe. Come, and bring this troubled Spirit into thy ſerene and undiſturbed Regions above. Come, and give it the Wings of an Angel, that I may flee away and be at reſt. That I may flee away from all the follies, and from all the ſorrows of this ſinful life; and be at reſt with thee, my Deareſt Lord.

At reſt in that peaceful place, in that Paradiſe above; where is no dangerous Fruit to invite, no tempting Eve *to ſolicite,*

no ſubtil Serpent to deceive: But we ſhall all live like ſo many Gods indeed, perfectly wiſe and perfectly good; inviting one another only to praiſe and love thee, with our united ſtrength. Thee, who art the firſt and the laſt; the Beginner of our Faith, and the Finiſher of our Hope; the Guide of our Pilgrimage, through the troubleſome Wilderneſs of this World; and the eternal reſt of our wearied Souls in that heavenly Country, which overflows with pleaſures for evermore.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Two Reasons more, to induce us to raise our thoughts and affections to the Appearing of our Lord.

VI.

AND the very first step we shall take towards our heavenly rest, will be so surprizing, and advance us so far above our present imperfections; that it must needs, if we seriously consider it, make this Appearing of his extremely desirable. Because all good men shall have the favour then to be snatcht from this Earth, and carried up into the Air, to meet our Lord Jesus there; when he appears in his Glory.

And who is there that understands himself, who would not wish to be thus translated; rather than to stay here,

though it were to ſee our Lord come to reign with his Saints a thouſand years upon the Earth? Which Judaical conceit (as S^t *Hierom* truly calls it) was embraced by many Great men in ancient times, as a piece of the moſt Orthodox Faith. So *Juſtin Martyr* eſteemed it; and *Irenæus*, with many others, were very zealous for it. And if they had thought more of ſpiritual delights, which the Saints ſhould have in that Sabbath (as they termed it) by the preſence of our Lord, S^t *Auſtin*, * for his part, acknowledges it would have been a tolerable Opinion, to which he himſelf was ſometimes inclined. For all good men, as I ſaid before, would be glad to ſee righteouſneſs planted more univerſally in the Earth, and prevailing over vice and wickedneſs, before the diſſolution of all things. And yet, even then (ſhould we ſuppoſe them to be ſo happy here) they would be far more glad to behold our Lord appear in his Glory to take them quite away from this Earth. Where as long as they continue, they muſt needs be dull and heavy, cloudy and dark, and enjoy but little of him; till they quit this groſs Body of fleſh and bloud, and go up into

* *L.* xx. *de Civit. Dei, c.* 7.

to a purer ſtate of light, and vigorous Life.

Which S^t *Paul* hath given us hope we ſhall enter into, at the appearing of our Lord. Who will deſcend from Heaven with great acclamations (you heard before from 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16.) to raiſe the dead and judge the World. And then his Saints are not to remain any longer here, but a ſudden change being made in them (1 *Cor.* xv. 52.) both they who are then alive, and all thoſe who are newly raiſed from the dead, ſhall be CAUGHT UP TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR, *v.* 17. There he will ſhew himſelf; and not upon this Earth. Thither they ſhall be carried up unto him; and not he come down hither unto them.

And if you well obſerve it, the Apoſtle teaches you to believe, that this aſcent of the Saints unto him, will be in a very glorious manner. Juſt as he comes from Heaven, ſhall they go up thither; For S^t *Paul* ſaith we ſhall be caught up IN THE CLOUDS, as ſo many triumphal Chariots ſent to fetch us from this Earth and tranſport us to himſelf. Who when he ſtood before his Judges to re-

ceive his Sentence from them, thus deſcribes his own coming to judge them, xxvj. Matth. 64. *Hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the CLOUDS of Heaven.* Though now, that is, I am arraigned and condemned by you, as if I were the vileſt of men; you ſhall one day ſee that I am the Son of God, by whom you ſhall be judged; for with amazement you ſhall behold me clothed with Divine Majeſty, and coming as the Vicegerent of the ſupreme Lord of all to call you to an account. For every one knows that *Clouds* are called the *Chariot of God*, civ. Pſal. 3. and therefore *his coming in the CLOUDS of Heaven* can ſignifie nothing elſe but his appearing in the Glory and with the Authority of his Father; as Lord of the World, that hath conquered all his Enemies, and is come to pronounce the ſentence of God upon them.

In ſuch a ſplendid manner, with the like pomp and ſtate, ſhall we be carried up to him; as ſo many Princes going to wait upon him, and to receive the honour he will delight to confer upon us in the ſight of all the World: Nay, it will be part of our honour to be conveyed

to

to him, just as *Elias*, yea he himself ascended into Heaven. For a *Chariot of Fire* appeared for the transportation of the one (2 *Kings* ij. 11.) and *a Cloud*, which is the same, received the other out of the Apostles sight, i. *Act.* 9.

O blessed Day, O happy Appearing, doth an heavenly-minded Christian often think with himself, *when a sight of my Saviour will draw me up to him, to be where he is! O most glorious, most beautiful Spectacle, when his Beams which fall upon me shall make me ascend from this Earth, as the Vapours do before the Rays of the Sun! O the joy that will fill my heart, when I shall see those gilded Chariots sent from my Saviour, to fetch me unto himself!*

How shall I sing when I am uncooped, and let out of this Cage (wherein I am now confined) to accompany the free people of the Air, in their heavenly Melodies? What a pleasure will it be to look behind me, as I fly up unto Jesus, and see what a poor spot this Earth is; of which I shall then have taken my leave for ever? O how glad shall I be, that I am to return no more to a place so dull, so dark, and so full of miseries?

How happy shall I think my self, that I am gone quite away from this vile Orb; which will not seem then to my exalted Soul so big as a Pins head? Nay, how joyful will it make me, to find that I am at last ascended up so high; as to have lost the sight of this little Globe, and of all the Kingdoms and Empires that it contains?

O my Gracious Lord, pardon me if I be sometime apt to think, that thou stayest too long before thou comest, to call me up unto those heavenly places. This Flesh is too unwieldy a Load, when I think of that Aerial state. It hath made me groan, ever since thou madest me believe, that thou wilt bestow a lighter Garment upon my Soul. Heretofore, indeed, I fansied nothing more than a Body fresh and plump, a tall and proper Stature, a fair Face and beautiful Features; and I was prone to envy those who dwelt in such fine and goodly Palaces: But ever since the time that I heard of going into the Air, to meet with thee, my Lord; all the love they excite in my heart, makes such habitations seem no better than stately Prisons. I have lookt upon my self and sweetest Friends, in our most healthy estate; and sighed to think that we were in Chains and Fetters. Nay, the best of these houses, I

tell

tell them, at certain seasons, are but painted Sepulchres; wherein the mind lies dead and buried.

It is thou therefore, O most blessed Lord, who hast made me to wish so earnestly for thine Appearing. I owe these longings to the discovery which thou hast made to me, of another and better World, whither thou intendest to transport me. And if I have a mind to begin my Journey thither presently, if I would fain feel my Wings so grown that they might be able to bear me up above this Earth, if my Soul sometimes would willingly be released from these Chains, and have the freedom to leave this Flesh, and if I wish withal that this Flesh may be changed, and turned into a kind of spiritual Being; I must ascribe it unto thee, who hast begot these desires in me; by telling me of a Building of God eternal in the Heavens, when this earthly Tabernacle is dissolved.

Thou hast revealed these things to me, that I might desire them; and who can desire them, and not wish withal that he might presently enjoy them? Let it not displease thee therefore, I beseech thee again, O my Dearest Lord; if I say sometimes, I am weary of being here, Do not esteem me impatient, if in the agonies and pangs

of

of Love, I long to come up higher, and get as near as may be to thy ſelf. Suffer me to pray thee, that theſe Walls of Fleſh may not long immure me, and exclude me from thy face. At leaſt open a Window for my gaſping Soul; that I may look into the purer Air; and pleaſe my ſelf in the thoughts of the flight which I ſhall one day take, to ſee thee and enjoy thee in unclouded Bliſs.

VII.

But there is ſomething beyond all this, to draw our affections from all things here, and to make us love and long for the coming of our Lord: And that is, the CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the Apoſtle tells us, in this very place, ſhall then be given to all thoſe, who are thus piouſly diſpoſed for it.

I cannot tell you how much is contained in theſe two words; unleſs I ſhould make another Treatiſe little leſs than this. For a CROWN denotes the higheſt degree of honour; and RIGHTEOUSNESS ſignifies, in the holy language, not only freedom from all pain and puniſhment, but the enjoyment of the

the greateſt felicity, that the moſt bounteous Goodneſs of God will beſtow upon his faithful Servants. No leſs than ſuch a Glory and happineſs, as our Lord himſelf hath received, for a reward of his labours. For *we ſee Jeſus* (ſaith the Apoſtle, ij. Heb. 9.) *who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the ſuffering of death, CROWNED with Glory and honour.* So S^t *John* ſaw him in a viſion (as he tells us xiv. *Rev.* 14.) ſitting upon a *white* (*i.e.* a bright and ſhining) *Cloud, having on his Head a GOLDEN CROWN.*

And thus our Lord hath cauſed it to be proclaimed, in the Goſpel of his Grace, it ſhall be done to all thoſe whom God delights to honour. He hath ſhown in our bleſſed Saviour, what he will beſtow upon his conſtant Followers. And in what he hath done for him, he hath ſhown alſo that *he is upright, and that there is no unrighteouſneſs in him.* They may depend upon his word, and be confident he will not fail their expectation; but crown their faith and patience with immortal Glory.

I ſay their patience, becauſe he will have them wait long, and ſtay a great while

while before they receive this Crown; which cannot be ſet upon their heads till the Day of his Appearing. He will take up all pious Souls indeed into a ſtate of joy and bliſs, ſurpaſſing all that we can now conceive, as ſoon as they depart this life; but the perfection of it they muſt wait for till he have gathered the whole Body of the faithful to him, that he may crown them all together. So the Ancients underſtand that place. xi. *Heb.* 39, 40. as may be ſeen in *Theodoret, Oecumenius, Theophylact*, and others. And ſo the laſt-named Writer diſcourſes at large upon the xxiij. *Luke* 43. according to the Doctrine of S^t *Chryſoſtom*, whom he conſtantly follows. Who pronounces that the Soul lies ἀστεφάνωτος * *uncrowned*, till the reſurrection of the dead; which is the time when we ſhall all receive according to what we have done in the Body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Which was not his Opinion alone, or the ſenſe of ſome few others; but the current Doctrine of the ancient Fathers. Who look upon that inviſible place and ſtate, wherein the Souls of good men are before the Reſurrection, as ſo much inferiour to that wherein they ſhall be afterward,

* In 1 Cor. xv. 19.

ward, that they have bestowed very different Names upon them; expressing the imperfect, though very happy, condition in which we must remain, till our Lord will be pleased to appear for our consummation. It will not be amiss to mention the descriptions they give of both.

The place and state before the Resurrection they call, *Paradise*; *the Bosom of* Abraham; the *Feast of the Patriarchs*; the *outward Altar*; *below the Altar*; the *Porch of the Sanctuary*; the *Courts of the Lord*; the *Custody*; and *the storehouse of Souls*; *secret receptacles*; the *hidden Seats or Tabernacles of the godly*; *convenient* or *due places*; *places meet for them, or worthy of them*; *the place of refreshment, of Light, of Peace*; *a Portion of the spiritual Rest*; the *Rest of security*; *a certain retiring place of everlasting Rest*; *the Port of Eternal Security*; *the bright, the fragrant, the Royal Tabernacles*; *the Earnest or Pledge of the Kingdom*; *the White Rayment*; *a Chamber in the Palace Royal*; *an Habitation with God*; *the* Asylum *or place of refuge*; with other such like Names; which are so obvious, that none can fail to be acquainted with them, who read the ancient Doctors of our Religion. Among whom S^t *Ambrose* hath adventured

adventured to give us a very particular account of this ſtate: which I ſhall ſet down, becauſe it will be very pleaſing to thoſe, who are deſirous of ſome diſtinct conception of the happineſs we hope for, before the Reſurrection, in the Celeſtial Tabernacles.

L. de Bono Mortis, c. xj.

"Where the joy of juſt Souls, ſaith he, "will be diſpoſed *per Ordines quoſdam*, "by certain Orders, Ranks or Degrees. "*Firſt*, there is the joy that they have "overcome the fleſh; and were not "crooked by its inticements. *Secondly*, "that at the rate of their induſtry and "innocence, they enjoy ſecurity, and are "not intangled like the Souls of the "wicked in errours and perturbations; "and are neither tortured with the me- "mory of their Vices, nor vexed with "the rage of ſolicitude and cares. *Third- "ly*, that they are ſupported with the "Divine Teſtimony, of their having ob- "ſerved the Law; ſo that they are not "in fear of the uncertain event of their "deeds in the laſt Judgment. *Fourthly*, "becauſe they begin to underſtand their "Reſt and Eaſe, and to foreſee their fu- "ture Glory; and pleaſing themſelves "with that conſolation in their dwelling-

"places,

"places, they live at eaſe, with great "tranquillity, invironed with the Guards "of Angels. And the *Fifth Order* or "Rank, hath the ſweetneſs of a moſt "plentiful exultation or triumph, that "they are eſcaped out of the Priſon of "this corruptible Body, into light and "liberty; and poſſeſs the promiſed inhe-"ritance. For there is an Order of the "reſt, as there is of the reſurrection. "We ſhall all riſe, *but every one in his* "*order. Chriſt the Firſt-fruits, then they* "*that are Chriſt's, who believe his coming:* "*and then is the end.* There ſhall be "therefore a different Order of Dignity "and Glory, as there will be an Order "of Deſerts. So that in the *ſixth Order*, "their Countenance will begin to ſhine "as the Sun, and to be compared to the "lights of the Stars: but is ſuch a bright-"neſs as cannot decay. And the *ſeventh* "*Order* will be, that they may exult with "confidence and full aſſurance, and con-"fide without any doubting, and rejoyce "without trembling; making haſte to "ſee his Countenance, to whom they "have devoted the Obedience of a moſt "diligent ſervice. From whence, by the "remembrance of an innocent Conſci-

"ence,

"ence, they may preſume a glorious "reward of a ſmall labour: which they "beginning to receive, ſhall know that "the ſufferings of this preſent time are "unworthy that ſo great a Glory of an "eternal recompence ſhould be compa-"red with them.

This is the Order wherein he places juſt Souls before our Lord come to bring them into his heavenly Kingdom. And ſome Body under the name of S^t *Auſtin* hath more briefly expreſſed it thus *; "We believe that when our Soul is freed "from the bonds of the fleſh, if we have "lived well and uprightly before God, "the Quire of Angels will preſently come "to meet us, and Troops of all the Saints "will run into our embraces; and bring "us to ſupplicate the true Judge. Then "peace will incompaſs us, and deep ſe-"curity. We ſhall fear no more the fiery "Darts of the Devil, nor any other ene-"my that deſires to caſt our Souls into "danger. Not ſword, not fire, not the "cruel face of the Tormentor, not hun-"ger, not thirſt, nor any ſickneſs. The "fleſh ſhall no longer be contrary to the "ſpirit; nor ſhall we fear any danger: "but having caſt off the burden of the "fleſh,

* *L. de ſalutaribus Documentis*, c. xl. Tom. 4.

"flesh, the Holy Spirit (to whom we "had before given a Mansion in our Bo-"dy) will give us a Mansion in Hea-"ven. And so we shall joyfully and "gladly expect the Day of Judgment; "in which the Souls of all men shall re-"ceive rewards according to their deeds.

Now that place and state into which we shall be admitted then, they call *the Highest Heaven*; *the Inner Altar*; *above the Altar*; *the House of God*; *the Seat of Christ*; *the Celestial Kingdom*; *the Heavenly Inheritance*; *the Goods of the Kingdom*; *the consummation of Glory*; *the reward of immortality*; *the distribution of Royal donatives*; *perfect joy*; *the expected reward*; *the end of all Good*; *the intire reward of deserts*; *the time of Crowns*; *the Kingdom of fruition*; *the perfect participation of good things*; with other names of the like import; which signifie something much beyond what we shall enjoy before our Lord's Appearing.

I shall conclude what they say of both these states, with the words of S^t *Austin*, in his Exposition upon S^t *John*. "All "Souls, saith he, when they go out of "this World, have their different rece-"ptions: the good have joy, and the evil Tract. xlix.

"have torment. But when there ſhall "be a Reſurrection, the joy of the good "ſhall be more ample, and the torment "of the bad more grievous. The holy "Patriarchs are received in peace, and "ſo are Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, "and the good Faithful: but all theſe are "ſtill in the end to receive that which "God hath promiſed. For even the Re-"ſurrection of the Fleſh is promiſed, "the conſumption of death, and eternal "life with the Angels. This we ſhall all "receive together: But as for the Reſt "which is given preſently after Death, "every man receives it, if he be worthy "of it, when he departs from hence. "The Patriarchs received it firſt, after-"wards the Prophets, and more lately "the Apoſtles, and ſtill more lately the "holy Martyrs, and every day the good "Faithful, *&c.*

And with theſe more ancient words of *Irenæus*; who diſcourſes in this manner: "Since our Lord went away in the midſt "of the ſhadow of Death, to that place "where the Souls of the dead are; and "afterward was raiſed corporally; and "after his reſurrection was taken up into "Heaven; It is manifeſt that the Souls "of

"of his Disciples also (for whom the "Lord wrought these things) shall go "into the invisible place appointed to "them by God; and shall stay there till "the Resurrection, expecting the Resur-"rection: Afterward receiving their "Bodies, and rising again perfectly, that "is corporally, as our Lord also rose a-"gain; so they shall come to the sight of "God. For no Disciple is above his "Master; but every one that is perfect "shall be as his Master. As our Lord "therefore did not straightway, flying "from hence, depart to Heaven, but ex-"pecting the time of the Resurrection "appointed of the Father (which was "fore-signified in *Jonas*) after three days "rising again, was taken up into Hea-"ven: even so we also ought to wait "with patience the time appointed by "God for our Resurrection, fore-told by "the Prophets; and so rising again be "taken up, as many of us as the Lord "shall account worthy of it.

And whosoever shall be thought worthy of that World (as our Lord speaks) and of the resurrection of the dead, they will be filled, no doubt, with inconceivable joy, to meet so many pious Souls,

and ſo many Friends, who will be all aſſembled at that time to receive the reward, they have ſo long waited for. *For if all the Faithful be one Body* (as S^t *Chryſoſtom*, or the Author of the Commentary on the *Hebrews* *, under his name, ſpeaks) *it will be a greater pleaſure to this Body to be Crowned all together, than if it ſhould be done by parts, For the righteous even in this are admirable, that they rejoice in the good of their Brethren, as well as their own: and therefore this will be according to their hearts deſire, that they ſhall be Crowned with their Fellow-Members; For it is a great ſatisfaction to be glorified together.*

* In xi. Heb. 40.

Of which ſince we have ſo ſure an expectation, "and the juſt (as S^t *Ambroſe* ſpeaks in the place fore-mentioned) "have ſuch a recompence, that they ſhall "ſee the face of God, and behold that "light which inlightens every man; what "ſhould we all do from hence forward, "but, as he ſays, put on this reſolution, "and ſtudy that our ſouls may draw near "to God, that our prayer may draw near "to him, that our deſire may cleave unto him, and we may never be ſeparated from him? Even while we remain "here,

"here, let us be fast knit to God, by "meditating, by reading, by seeking, "and endeavour to know him as we are "able. For we know here but in part; "because all things here are imperfect, "there in their perfection. Here we "are little Children; there we shall be "strong men. We see here, saith S^t *Paul*, "as in a Glass darkly; but there face to "face. There with open face we shall "behold the Glory of God; which here "our Souls being involved in flesh and "blood, and sullied with their spots, "cannot behold sincere. For who, saith "he, can see my face and live? How "should we? since our eyes cannot en- "dure so much as the Rays of the Sun; "which would put them out if we should "fix them on so great a light. How can "we behold then the shining Counte- "nance of our Creator, while we are "wrapt up in the Rags of this Flesh?

We must stay for so glorious a sight till that happy day, when we shall be unclothed, or rather clothed upon, with the Garments of Celestial light. That's the time and not till then, when he designs to do us the great honour, of setting the Crown of righteousness upon our

heads. Now is the time of toils (as he ſpeaks in another place) of agonies, of combates, of conflicts, of ſtrife for Victory: then is the time of refreſhments, of crowns, of retributions, of rewards, of reſurrection, and of the reſtitution of all things. Which ought to make all ſerious Believers, look for that day with earneſt longings; and lift up their heads above this viſible World, as men deſirous to receive this glorious Diadem. In compariſon with which, the moſt goodly Fillets that ever bound any Imperial Brow, are not worthy ſo much as to be named.

O that glorious Crown, purer than the fineſt Gold! (is a pious heart inclined to ſay) *that Crown of righteouſneſs and of Life! which my Lord hath ſo dearly purchaſed for me, with his precious blood! how do I covet it? how deſirous am I, how do I long to be Partaker of it? My head beats and akes, and cannot be at reſt, till this Crown, by his Royal hand, be ſet upon it. It is in pain, till inſtead of theſe Clouds wherewith it is ſurrounded; it be incompaſſed in a Circle of purer and brighter thoughts.*

It

It is sorely oppressed till these vain Dreams, and frivolous imaginations, which gather about it, fly away; and it be infolded in a Wreath of nobler contemplations. O how heavy is it, till this giddiness of mind, wherein I am whirl'd, be exchanged for a steady Orb of light; wherein my Soul, I hope, one day shall be unmoveably center'd?

I long to have these Ashes blown away; wherein the Sparks of Divinity lye raked up, in our eclipsed nature. O when will that sweet breath come, that shall make them shine; and set them free to fly to their Element above? When shall those flashes of light, which sometime break forth, be blown up into a clearer and more constant flame? Can one believe, and not wish to find himself in the House of God, in the midst of the heavenly Ministers, surrounded with such glorious sights, as eye never saw, nor heart can possibly conceive? I am not able to refrain from saying, O when shall I see my mind incircled in the Rays of Divine light? When shall it beam forth in such heavenly thoughts, and make my heart burn and sparkle with such ardors of love; that they shall cast a Glory round about my Head?

This is the Crown, which my Soul desires to wear. This is the Garland I would win; the glorious Diadem, wherewith my restless mind would be adorned. It is not Silver and Gold, Pearls and Precious stones, or any such like things (whose rich names I borrow to express my present thoughts) that I wish and desire: but the brightness of the knowledge of God to fold it self about my head; and that I may sit invironed in a Ring of admiring thoughts; of pure, undisturbed, never-ending thoughts of thee, and of thy marvellous kindness towards me.

Which happiness till my mind enjoy, the pain that I feel will not cease; unless thou, Lord, wilt be pleased to assuage it, by comfortable hopes and joyful expectations of such an eternal weight of Glory. Even when I have left this World, and am come to those lightsome Tabernacles, which thou hast prepared for those that truly love thee; I shall long to know more of thee; and desire still to be nearer to thee; and look to see thee come out of thy Royal Palace, to crown the faith and hope of thine obedient Servants.

And in the mean time may I be so happy, as to be disposed into the Order of those, who perpetually talk of thy love, and sing

thy

thy praiſes, and rejoice with perfect confidence and full aſſurance, and are ever lifting up their heads to ſee thee, and often ſaying one to another, when will he come, when will he appear in the higheſt and moſt exalted Glory? O bleſſed day! when mixed with the Quire of Saints, we ſhall fly in their Company to meet the Spouſe; and ſay every one of us, I have found him whom my Soul loveth; *I have found him, the ſight of whom I ſhall loſe no more; but indued with the Glory of immortality and the ſplendor of incorruption, ſhall live for ever with the Lord.*

O happy ſtate of Saints; when they ſhall have fleſh without earth, a body without ſenſe of pain, a Soul without fear, Life without Death, Age without Time, Light without Night, and Bleſſedneſs without end! Chriſtianity will never let us be ſatiated with theſe delectable thoughts. This is its refreſhmeut, this is its delight, this is its pleaſure and joy; in mind and heart to go to the Seat of God; and there to take its place, and ſeize on its ſhare in that Seat; not by its own preſumption, but by the promiſe of God. Who hath already exalted our Lord Chriſt in that bleſſed place; and by our relation to him, we challenge

Ex. L. de Viro perfecto ſub nom. S. Hieron. Tom. iv.

challenge a right to be so happy. For he is the Head of his Body the Church; He is the Head of all principality and power: From
ij. Col. 19. *whom all the Body, by Joynts and Bands, having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Three Considerations more to draw our Affections to the Appearing of our Lord.

VIII.

I Have already said so much of the Happiness we expect, when our Lord shall come again, that here I might put an end to this Discourse: if it would not be more profitable distinctly to consider, that after we are caught up from this Earth to meet the Lord in the Air, and he hath done us honour in the sight of all the World; we shall all (as I have already suggested) march with him unto Heaven, in goodly array, and comely order, with those Crowns of Glory, which he hath given us, upon our Heads. This should mightily move us to love his Appearing; that we shall then

then appear together with him: and not abide in the Air, though encompaſſed with ſo much Glory; but be carried up with him, far higher, into the pureſt Sky.

When our minds are made all Light, we ſhall ſee a vaſt way before us; and behold the Palace where God himſelf dwells, inviting us unto it. Thither our Lord will have us attend upon him and accompany him; when he hath finiſhed the Judgment of the Great Day. Where the Holy Books inform us we ſhall be ſumptuouſly treated; with no leſs kindneſs, magnificence and joy, than a King, we may conceive, would entertain his only Son, when he brought home his beloved Bride, whom he had long ago eſpouſed to himſelf: For whoſe reception he prepares the moſt Royal Supper, a glorious Marriage-Feaſt, to welcome her unto his houſe.

And will not this make every faithful Soul, who is a holy Member of that Body the Church, whom our Lord is pleaſed to owne for his Bride, ſtill more deſirous, if not impatient, of the coming of the Celeſtial Bridegroom; to perfect his love, and complete the promiſes where-

in

in he ſtands ingaged, by the gracious Covenant he made with us when he contracted us to himſelf? What is there that we all ſo much covet as the exceſs of joy, and the higheſt pitch of pleaſure? And where are theſe to be found in ſo much purity, in ſuch fullneſs, and ſo perpetual, as in his moſt bleſſed Preſence? Which ſhould force us to burſt out with the greateſt earneſtneſs, when we think of that Heavenly Feaſt which he hath prepared for us, into ſuch expreſſions as thoſe of *David.*

As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, even the living God; O when ſhall I come and appear before God? *I have ſmall ſatisfaction, Alas! in theſe dull, and ſhort delights, which I find on Earth. What taſte is there in this green traſh? And there is little other fruit that grows in the Garden of this World, but what is ſowre and harſh, and ſets my teeth on edge. It is too far from thy Beams, to bring forth any thing very ſweet. Nothing can be ripened at this diſtance from thee, to ſatisfie a ſoul*

and

and yield it all the contentment it desires.

Bring me therefore into thy Paradise above. O conduct me into thy Eden, *the Garden of thy delights. Lead me to those Fruits, which are brought to maturity by the constant presence of the Sun of righteousness. Let me feast on those pleasures, which are all pleasure: and enter into the joy, which is fullness of joy for evermore.*

And till thou thinkest me meet for such entertainments; may it please thy love, but to give me some tasts of their incomparable sweetness! May I relish no joys so much as those! May I always have the remembrance of them fresh upon my Soul! And may I be so happy as to be preserved, by the savour of them from the sinful allurements of all other pleasures!

Hence, hence, all you beggarly delights, which would have me forget my happiness. Stand aside you Images of true joy, and hinder not my prospect of that heavenly Paradise. Lend me your help, or else get you gone, and trouble me no more. Assist my benighted thoughts, and represent that blissful place to them; or else I desire not your Company. I have eaten of all your dainties; but still am empty and void of satisfaction. I know what you have to say, the very

very utmoſt you can offer me; therefore follow me with no further importunities: For my heart is ſet on that fair, that delicious place, where the Great Lord keeps his Court, and entertains his Friends with endleſs pleaſures.

O holy City of God, what glorious things are ſpoken of thee! How free, how ſprightly, and how full of joy, are all thy happy Inhabitants! What heart is there, that is ſo dull as not to long to dwell in that bleſſed place; where every head wears a Crown of Life, and every hand carries a Palm of Victory? Where every eye overflows with joy, and every tongue with Pſalms of praiſe? Where light ſhines in every face; and love ſmiles in every Countenance? Where every heart is perfectly ſatisfied, in the fullneſs of its own bliß: and ſatisfied again with the pleaſure it hath, to ſee the felicity of others?

It is too much trouble to me that I am not there; O let me not loſe the thought of it too! I ſigh to think that I ſtand at ſuch a diſtance from my Father's Houſe; and ſhall I ſuffer a further remove, by turning away my eyes from thence? Go, O my Soul, go thither in thy thoughts and daily meditations. Send a thouſand wiſhes before thee thither; to tell thy Lord that thou art coming to him.

Say,

Say, whom have I in Heaven but thee; who wenteſt thither to open it to all thy faithful Followers? What have I on Earth, but my hope by following thee, to arrive at laſt where thou art gone before me? Whither ſhould I look but unto Heaven; now that thou, my Deareſt Lord, art aſcended thither, to prepare a place for me? A place of reſt, and ſecure peace; a place of joy, and conſtant enjoyment; a place from whence I am loth my thoughts or my heart ſhould deſcend, to return to this poor Earth again: for there they grow ſo dull, that it is hard to lift them up, to look to thee.

O keep them with thee, keep them with thee, thou King of Heaven! Settle and fix them there, where I my ſelf expect to be; where thou alſo expecteſt me; where they ſhall find eaſe for every grief, and joy in the midſt of the greateſt tribulation. O fix them unmoveably in this quiet place, this eternal Reſt. And when they muſt attend the affairs of this lower life, may they only look, not come, down to them; and ſtill remain and ſtay with thee.

IX. And

IX.

And when theſe things ſhall be fulfilled, the Apoſtle tells us, in the place before-named (1 *Theſſ.* iv. 17.) that we ſhall be ALWAYS WITH THE LORD: who paſſed his promiſe to his Diſciples a little before he left the World, that he would *come again, and receive them to himſelf, that where he is, there they may be alſo*, xiv. John 3. Of which promiſe he was ſo mindful after he went to Heaven, that he further informs S^t *Paul* (who ſpake this, *by the word of the Lord*) that he will not part with us, when he hath conducted us to his Fathers houſe; but keep us *ever* with him there; in joys and pleaſures that never fade away.

A condition which we cannot but love and paſſionately long for, if we have any love for him or for our ſelves. For there are none of our enjoyments here, but muſt be frequently intermitted, and are too often interrupted: even the enjoyment of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and the ſenſe he gives us of Celeſtial things, we find, to our ſorrow, ſuffers this incon-

venience. Neither are we diverted from them only by the troubles of this life, or the violence of other worldly temptations, which preſs too boldly and rudely upon us: but by the moſt neceſſary occaſions, and the moſt innocent fruitions; to which Nature not only inclines us, but requires our frequent attendance.

Of how much of our time doth ſleep poſſeſs it ſelf, though we deſire never ſo earneſtly to continue awake? How little do we live in the account of reaſon; if we do but remember this Image of Death, which hath us ſo many hours, every night, in its arms? And yet beſides this, eating and drinking, journeys and viſits, the buſineſſes and cares of this life, which challenge ſome of our thoughts, devour, no body knows how great, a portion of every day. To ſay nothing of thoſe hours, when we are fit for little or nothing; but are forced to find, as we ſignificantly ſpeak, ſome paſtime for the entertainment of our wearied minds.

O bleſſed Jeſus! how few are the minutes that theſe Souls, incloſed in fleſh, can ſpend in thy company? Into what a little room

are

are the thoughts of thee, and of thy unmeasurable love, most wretchedly crowded? How soon are we weary, and how often are we forced away; when we have the greatest mind to thy sweet Society? O the cares that not only divert, but sometimes oppress us! O the multitude of troubles which are wont to disquiet us! the sicknesses and infirmities of our Bodies, which indispose us! besides the great weakness and feebleness of these Spirits, which are not able long to bear thee company!

It is but a wish, I see, that I may always stay with thee. I feel my self pulled away, and cannot keep my soul above, even when thou hast lifted it up unto thee. And therefore I cannot but renew my desires, that thou wouldest be pleased to hasten thy coming. That's the time I long to see, because I would be ever with thee, and always behold thy face: and perpetually speak of thee; and declare thy love without teasing, in the height of love and devotion to thee.

O what a change will that day make in me; when I shall be all Life, and see not so much as the image or shadow of Death any more! When I shall neither slumber nor sleep, much less be sick, or grow old and

dye; but always wake, and enjoy a perfect health, a vigorous Youth, and Immortal Life? O the bleſſedneſs of that change, when I ſhall be hungry no more; nor have my head diſturbed with the fumes and Clouds of Food? When all my Journeys will be at an end; and I ſhall never loſe nor leave the Company I love! When I ſhall neither be croſt by others, nor vext with the violence of my own paſſions! When I ſhall be no more perplext with cares, nor dampt with fears; but dwell ſecure, in aſſured joys, for evermore!

Joys in the perfection of a glorified Body; and of an exalted, enlarged Spirit! Joys to find my ſelf in the company of thy Saints; and welcomed into the noble Society of Angels! Joy at the ſight of my deareſt Friends; the greateſt joys in thy preſence, and in the light of thy countenance; from whom I hope for all this joy!

O come, moſt bleſſed Saviour, that we may all be nothing but joy, and love, and peace, without any end. Come, and bring us to our beloved Reſt; and where can our Souls find any reſt, but in thy Boſom? Come, that we may reſt from our labours; and where can we lay down our ſelves in perfect repoſe, but only in thy love! O come,

and

and fill our hearts therewith; that we may hunger and thirſt no more. Come, that we may perfectly know what the new Wine of thy Kingdom is. Come, that we may deſire to feed on nothing elſe; but the ſweeteſt comforts, of ſeeing thy bleſſed face ſmileing on us. And that we may have no other buſineſs, nothing elſe to do, but to enjoy thee in all that we ſee: not ſo much employment beſides, as to ſpend any time (as now we are forced to do) in wiſhing to enjoy thee.

X.

And yet there is ſtill a greater reaſon remaining, why we ſhould love our Lord's Appearing; becauſe we ſhall be brought by that to the very top and higheſt pitch of bliſs: which is to SEE GOD (*Matth.* v. 8.) and to SEE HIM AS HE IS, 1 *John* iij. 2. Not as the old Prophets ſaw him in Viſions and Dreams; nor as others ſaw him, in the Angels of his preſence: But—— Alas! who can tell what this ſight is? What tongue, unleſs touched, as the Apoſtles were, by the Holy Ghoſt, can declare any thing of ſuch a bliſs? The

Day of *Pentecoſt* muſt return again, if we expect to have any language to expreſs, or thoughts to conceive the meaning of theſe words. We muſt intreat ſome Angel to come, and tell us, if he can, what it is to *ſee God*. Or rather we muſt confeſs, that, if he ſhould, we cannot underſtand ſuch Celeſtial language. It is above our reach; and we do but babble, we do not ſpeak, when we adventure to diſcourſe of it.

Nay, when we depart this World, and ſhall be admitted into the bleſſed company above, we may not be able to comprehend much of it; if the opinion of many of the Ancient Fathers be true, that the Saints ſhall not enjoy that which is properly meant by the *Viſion of God*, till after the Great Day of our Lord. And therefore it will be our beſt way now, to do as the Painter did; who being to make a Picture of Love, drew nothing on his Table but a Veil; which covered no body knew what under the ſhadow of it. Not ſo much to ſhow, as ſome have poorly conceived, that Love is blind; as to declare that it is an ineffable thing, a myſterious paſſion, not to be deſcribed by humane Art. Such, I am ſure, is this

Viſion

Viſion of God; and ſuch is the love that it will beget. It is a Secret never to be known, but by the enjoyment of it: A myſtery reſerved in the holy Place, to be beheld only by entring into it.

We have all a natural deſire indeed, to pry into this, as well as all other Secrets. A ſtrong Appetite we find within us, to be admitted into an intimate acquaintance with thoſe things, which are cloſely lockt up from us. We cannot chuſe but long to go within the Veil; and would fain have the Curtain drawn aſide, that the glorious face of the Divine Majeſty may appear. But after all our ſearch and buſie enquiry, we are able to ſay no more at preſent but this;

O happy Darkneſs! O bleſſed, O moſt glorious obſcurity? For I do not know what elſe to call thee: How joyful is it to think, that thou art more than we can ask or think? What a pleaſure is it to know, that thou ſurpaſſeſt all that can now be known? How comfortable is it to believe that thou art hid from our eyes; only becauſe we are not capable to behold thy brightneſs?

Thou ſhameſt indeed hereby our ſmall underſtanding; but publiſheſt thine own moſt excellent Greatneſs. We are laid very low, when we hear thee ſpeaking thus, at preſent; but it lifts us up and highly exalts us, in our future hopes. We have no means to comprehend this gracious promiſe; nor know we what to think, when we read theſe words, You ſhall SEE GOD. *We muſt confeſs our weakneſs, which is abſolutely puzzled, with ſo few and ſo plain words. If we have any thing to boaſt of, it is only this advantageous ignorance. All that we have to glory in is; that (ſuch our hopes) we know not what to conceive of this dark (ſo we muſt now ſpeak) this unſeen and hidden brightneſs.*

But this we know, becauſe thou, O God, haſt told us, that when this preſent darkneſs is done away, and we ſhall ſee thee as thou art, *WE SHALL BE LIKE THEE. O moſt deſirable ſight, which will ſo happily transform us! O much wiſht for day; which will ſet us in ſuch a light, as will make us all bright and ſhining too! Shining in the light of the Wiſdom of God; in the light of his Purity; and of his Bliſs and Immortality. In*

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the light which makes the eyes of Angels ſhine ſo brightly; and which preſerves the youth of Saints. The light which no man can approach unto; till thou, O God, who art that Light, ſhalt finiſh our hope, and bring us to ſee thee face to face.

And may we not be confident of this alſo (though we know ſo little) that when thou, O bleſſed God, ſhalt cauſe thy Son to appear, and ſhalt ſhow thy ſelf unto us, the very firſt glimpſe of thy Glory, at the greateſt diſtance from thee, will mightily attract our hearts unto thee? No Arrow, ſure, flies more ſwiftly from the ſtrongeſt Bow, no Bullet can be ſent with greater violence from the bended force of Steel, than our Souls ſhall then move, or rather ſhoot themſelves towards thee; that they may know what it is to ſee thee, and that they may be like thee.

And till that joyful day ſhall come, ſhine thou, O bleſſed Light, perpetually in theſe eyes. Strike through all the Clouds that encompaſs me round about; and by the bright hopes of thee, chaſe away all my gloomy thoughts, and put out the falſe luſtre of this deceitful World. Shed, O thou bleſſed light, thy glorious beams into this heart; and kindle there ſuch holy flames as may

conſume

consume all sinful desires, and purifie my Soul as thou art pure. Let me burn continually with an ardent love of thee; till thy bright day appear. Till not only these Walls of Flesh be pulled down, which intercept thee from me: but my Spirit fly up in a lightsome Body, that I may see thee.

That I may see thee, by whose power the Heavens and the Earth were made; thee by whose Wisdom all things are governed; thee by whose infinite kindness mankind was redeemed. What a joy will it be to me to see thee, who didst conduct me in my way; direct me at every turn; support me in every step; assist me in all the various passages of my life; secure me from innumerable temptations, preserve me from as many dangers; and at last broughtest me safe to see thee, and rejoice with thee for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the mighty power and pleasure of Love, when it is settled in the heart.

AND thus I am come to the end of this other part of my Discourse: Wherein the Reasons of placing our best affections on the appearing of Christ have been so plainly deduced; that, as they cannot but be understood, so they cannot but move those hearts, which do not quite turn away their minds from all consideration of them. And that it should be hard to do, one would think, if we have the least acquaintance with the Christian Religion. Which hereby most strongly recommends it self unto us, that it gives us such great and glorious hopes; and entertains our tiresome Pilgrimage with such delightful contemplations, of the joys and pleasures we shall have in another

another World; eſpecially when we come to reſt with our Lord for ever.

No man that is in his Wits, would be without the comfort of this expectation. It far exceeds all our preſent enjoyments: and is in it ſelf ſo deſireable, that we may truly ſay, Faith doth not beg to be admitted by us; but rather commands us to open our hearts, and let it in; if we would have any conſtant pleaſure, and ſettled peace and ſatisfaction there, which nothing but the Chriſtian Belief can eſtabliſh in us. And this is the miſery of all thoſe who do not faithfully receive the Goſpel; that as they ſhall miſs of the greateſt Bleſſings hereafter, ſo they want the higheſt comfort in the World at preſent: Which is to wait with aſſured hope for thoſe good things, which our Lord will give us at his Appearing. By the expectance of which, we are not only a little pleaſed while we employ our minds in ſuch meditations as theſe; but they put us into a ſtate of pleaſure and conſtant ſatisfaction, by drawing our hearts to Heaven, and placing us out of the power, though not out of the reach of all worldly accidents.

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For such is the condition of man, as the Disciples of *Plato*'s School have well expressed it, that there are two effusions and ecstasies, aswe may call them, of his Soul; two sorts of inebriation (as some of them love to speak) whereby he is dispossessed of himself. By the one (which is a Divine rapture) we are carried out and placed above our selves: by the other (which is the witchery of sense) we are hurried away, and thrust down into a condition below our selves. Their meaning is, that man being of a middle nature, between Angels and Beasts; by his intellectual part partaking of the nature of those heavenly Beings, and by his sensitive of the nature of the Brutes; he may so apply himself either to the one or to the other, that he come, in great measure, out of his middle condition, and go either upward to the former, or downward to the later.

And this strange feat is wrought by nothing else but by the power of Love; which evidently intrances our Souls, and transports us out of our selves: either to the Celestial Natures, if it be Divine; or to the brutish, if it be founded only in the Flesh. By exercising our minds

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in the actions of ſpiritual life, and placing our affections on things above, we may deliver and infranchize our ſelves from a ſervile baſe condition; and approach nearer to the degree of Angels than of ordinary men. As on the contrary, by applying our minds and hearts wholly to corporeal actions, and addreſſing all our ſervices to the things of this World, we may ſo inthral our ſelves, and bring our Souls into ſuch bondage; that we ſhall ſink down into a vile eſtate, and become more like Beaſts than men.

O ſtrange power of Love! which makes ſuch transformations! turning men either into Angels or into the moſt ſordid Creatures. How careful ſhould we be to obſerve its motions! What diligence ſhould we uſe, to watch whither it goes; and to ſee that this mighty paſſion be directed to the moſt excellent good? And if we do but open our eyes to receive the light of the glorious Goſpel, and all the Beauties that it preſents unto us, we cannot eaſily be deceived. There are a World of noble enjoyments to which our Saviour invites us; if we will vouchſafe to look upon them,

them, and not be ſo ſottiſh, as to faſten our eyes only on a few objects here before us. He hath opened to us the Kingdom of Heaven; and tells us he will ſhow us all the Glory of his Father's houſe; if we will but wait a while, till he be ready to come, and fetch us thither. Why ſhould we not believe him, and daily look up unto him; with hearts full of joy that we are beloved of the Lord of Life, and have a good hope to live together with him? What a change would this work in us? And how happy ſhould we be, to think of the far more glorious change, which the ſight of him will make; when by ſeeing him, we ſhall become what he is?

O the joy that begins to ſpring up in my heart! O what raviſhing words are thoſe, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS? *How ſweetly they enter into mine ears? How deliciouſly they ſpread and diffuſe themſelves all over my mind; and ſtrongly penetrate to my very heart? I am changed already. I am not what I was; but quite another man: All*

light

light and joy, all ſpirit and life, while I think of theſe things. And can I ever ſo forget them, as to be allured and drawn away, from my ſelf and my Saviour, from my enjoyments and my hopes, by any earthly pleaſures?

What compariſon is there between thoſe two ſtates I now deſcribed, that I ſhould be in danger of ſuch temptations? Is there any need to ask, which is moſt to be choſen? To ſuffer my heart to be touched with ſuch a ſenſe of Divine pleaſures, as to be raviſh'd out of my ſelf, and become more than man; or to expoſe it ſo to the ſolicitations of ſenſible delights, as to be inticed by them another way out of my ſelf, and transformed into the nature of the Beaſts that periſh?

We are all deſirous and forward enough to climb higher; and our ambition tempts us to mount to as noble a ſtation, as if is poſſible to reach: And therefore let us aſcend, O my Soul, to the Lord Jeſus; let us lift up our thoughts ſtill towards the holy place where he reigns; and look for the time of his Appearing, to make us reign with him for ever. This is the moſt pleaſant object we can behold; or rather is a collection of innumerable pleaſures, which

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all here met together: and therefore cannot but be of mighty power to ravish our Spirits, and ennoble our Natures, by making them Divine. Hither let us vigorously and cheerfully bend our thoughts; let our hearts send many and many a wish this way; and then it will be as impossible for any thing to hinder us from being made heavenly, as it is to keep the Stone from its Center, or the tenderest heart from becoming like to that which it dearly loves.

Here we see what God the Father Almighty will do for his Son Jesus; and what our Lord Jesus will do for us, who depend upon his Love. We behold ourselves here ranked among the Heavenly Host; thanged into Spirits; made perfect in love; crowned with immortality; beautified with the light of Divine Knowledge and with unspotted purity of heart; brought into the presence of our Lord, and unto the sight of God. On which incomparable happiness while we fix our eyes, it must needs snatch us quite from all other things; and make us live out of ourselves. But it will be only to place us above ourselves; and, by a most desireable departure from what we are, to put us into so blessed a

condition, that we shall never wish to return to our selves any more.

And indeed, the more or less our Souls are drawn forth of themselves either way, so much the harder or easier it is to go back into themselves again. For if we be much ravished with these heavenly things, if we love the Appearing of Christ exceedingly, and attentively fix our minds in expectation of it; we shall have little mind to turn our hearts towards corporeal enjoyments, during the sense and lively relish of those Divine pleasures, which have withdrawn us from them. And when the inclinations and necessities of our earthly Nature call us back again unto them, it will be with a remembrance of those Celestial joys still remaining; which will preserve our Souls from immersing themselves in things below them. Just as when a mans heart is engaged in the strictest bonds of love, which have tied him fast to a very agreeable person, whatsoever company he comes into, he will secretly steal out of it, to cast a glance upon that beloved object: So will our mind be apt to look up towards Heaven (even when we are in the charming

Society

Society of that person) if the Lord and the Glory of his Appearing be our chiefest love and highest delight. As on the contrary, if we have but a slight touch and taste of these heavenly truths, we shall be the easier diverted from them; and perswaded to yield up our selves to seek our satisfaction in the cold enjoyment of these earthly delights.

And thus it is, in like manner, when men follow brutal pleasures; the more strongly they are ravisht with them and addict themselves to them; the more they lose the use of their reason and understanding, and the more uncapable they grow, being so attentive to these delights, to receive any gust of nobler enjoyments. Whereas, if our taste of these things be more superficial, and we do not apply our minds with all their force unto them, nor dwell upon them; we shall be the easier called off from them, and stand in need of fewer importunities to quit their company, for better entertainments.

Which demonstrates how necessary it is, that we should endeavour to be well acquainted with the coming of our Lord; to believe it with an unshaken

faith; to perſwade our ſelves of it, as if we ſaw it; to ſet our hearts upon it, and place our comforts in it; that ſo it may have the greater authority over us, and command us irreſiſtibly from all things beneath us, and force us to give our ſelves intirely to our Lord Jeſus.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the means whereby this Love may be ſettled in our hearts; and the Benefit thereof.

AND for the better effecting this which ſo nearly concerns us, we ought, as to think frequently and ſeriouſly of it ſo, to uſe all the means that are in our power, to repreſent our bleſſed Lord, and his glorious Appearing, in the moſt lively manner unto our hearts. Among which, I believe, you will find none more effectual, than to frequent his Society, in the Communion of his Body and of his Blood. Where we not only meet with a fair occaſion, both to imprint upon our hearts a ſenſe of his love, and to expreſs all the love we have to him: but have a moſt powerful inſtrument alſo put into our hands, to enkindle and ſtir up the moſt hearty, vehe-

ment and burning Affection towards him.

For there he is ſet before our eyes in ſuch a poſture of love, as cannot but wound any heart, that hath the Grace to conſider what it ſees. There we behold him hanging for our ſake upon a Croſs; from whence his mighty love ſhoots the moſt piercing Darts into our Breaſts. We ſee him there in ſuch flames as offered him up intirely to do the Will of God; and, if we come near them, will touch us ſo ſenſibly, that we ſhall be diſpoſed to make our ſelves alſo a devout oblation to him, His Body broken, his Blood ſhed, his very Life ſacrificed for our ſafety, are there ſo evidently and diſtinctly ſet before our eyes; that as it will be hard for us not to be tenderly affected with his aſtoniſhing love to us, ſo we are hereby aſſured of his continued kindneſs, till he bring us to Eternal Life.

We do not indeed behold him there as ſitting on the Throne of his Glory; nor as appearing again the ſecond time to give us ſalvation: But yet it plainly ſhows us what he underwent, to purchaſe for us, as well as for himſelf, that Glory wherein he is; and bids us reſt ſatisfied

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he will do more for us, even all that he hath promised: of which, by these tokens and pledges of his love, which he hath left behind him when he departed this World, he doth most affectionately assure us. And by partaking of them, we become also one Body with him; and have communion with him in his Death and passion, and all the benefits he hath thereby obtained for his Church. Among which this is the last and the greatest, that we shall be with him where he is, and see the Glory which the Father hath given him. We ought not to doubt of it, being thus incorporate with him, and so united to him; that in him we already live, and reign, and are glorious: and can no more fail of appearing at last with him in his Glory, than the Members can fail to be advanced, when the Head, to which they are firmly and inseparably joyned, is highly honoured and dignified.

As a loving Wife, therefore, married to an Husband most completely qualified, but gone into a remote Country, cannot but fix her thoughts very much upon his coming, and often wish for the happy day which will bring them nearer, and

make them meet and live together; and, in the mean time, if she have his Picture exactly taken, cannot refrain from looking often on it, and pleasing her eyes and her mind with the very shadow of that dear Person; or if she have any token of his love left or sent her, whereby to remember him, is ever and anon taking it into her hands, and imprinting her kisses on it: so it becomes all those to do, who pretend any love to our Lord Jesus; who hath endeared himself to us by such incomparable loving kindness, and merited so highly of us, that it would be exceeding strange if we should be either insensible of his favours, or let them slip out of our minds, when (among the rest of the expressions of his wonderful love) he hath taken great care to preserve the remembrance of them there.

Our gracious Lord, the Bridegroom of our Souls, is gone a long journey, even as far as Heaven. He hath espoused us to himself, it is true, in great love, most assured love: but hath left us, for a time, here in this World, and removed himself so far from us, that, though there be nothing so desireable as his Company,

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to thoſe who are acquainted with him and have any affection for him, yet they find the diſtance is ſo exceeding great between them, that they cannot attain their much-wiſht-for enjoyment of him. And therefore every good Soul ſhould look towards him, and, ſighing within it ſelf, ſhould often ſay, *When will he come, when will he come! and let me have the long-deſired ſight of him? When will he come, and finiſh what he hath ſo graciouſly begun? O that he would come, and take me to him! O that he would come, and ſatisfie this Soul; which is ready to diſſolve, and ſweetly melt into that bliſsful union with him!* And till he pleaſe to grant this deſire, we ſhould often faſten our expecting eyes on the Picture he hath left us of himſelf; drawn, as I may ſay, by his own hand: wch tells us he will certainly come, and requires us to reſt aſſured he will be as good as his word, and give us Immortal Life in the Glory where he is. We ſhould frequent, I mean, the holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood; we ſhould love there to communicate with him, and knit our ſelves to him; it ſhould be our greateſt pleaſure to ſolace our ſelves in that repreſentation of him, till he comes. We

ſhould

ſhould affectionately receive into our hands thoſe tokens and pledges of his love, which he continually ſends us by his Miniſters, we ſhould take them into our mouths, yea let them into our hearts; and, embracing him in thoſe ſigns and ſeals of his Grace towards us, ſhould rejoyce in his love; till he himſelf appear, and lay our Souls to reſt in his Boſome for ever.

If there were no other benefit we ſhould receive by this means, than that thereby our love will be mightily excited towards him, who hath loved us ſo dearly, it were ſufficient to commend this duty to us. But we ſhall alſo grow thereby more confident of his Appearing again to perfect his love towards us; and in the mean time be ſtill receiving freſh tokens of the affection he now hath for us. For as the thoughts of his love hath the greateſt power over our hearts: ſo we need not fear to ſay, that the love he ſees in us, is of ſuch force and efficacy with him; that it ſtrongly moves his tender compaſſions towards us. *If any man love me* (ſaith he himſelf, xiv. *Joh.* 21, 23.) *he ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf*

ſelf to him. O, what a word is this, *I will love him?* How it pierces into the heart! How it ſtirs, and works; how it revives and refreſhes there! Can there be any thing greater than this, to be beloved of the Lord of Heaven, the Prince of Life, the King of Glory? What will not he do for thoſe whom he loves, when we ſee he did not ſtick to dye for them, even before they loved him?

You know that when *Lazarus* was ſick (as I think I have ſomewhere obſerved in another Treatiſe) his Siſters ſent this News to our Saviour, ſaying, *Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick*, xi. Joh. 3. This was a very ſhort Letter: And their grief perhaps would not permit them to write a longer. But they did not fare the worſe, becauſe they were not more ceremonious in their addreſſes: this alone did the buſineſs. O how great a power was there in theſe few words? They ſay no more to move him, but only this, *Lord, thou loveſt him*; and what doth not our Saviour do, to ſhow they were not miſtaken? Up he riſes; away he goes to the place of his abode; there needed no more prayers to bring him thither. And though there were many dangers in the way,

way, as the Story relates; though to go thither, his Diſciples thought was to caſt himſelf into a ſhowre of ſtones (v. 8.) though the Jews, he knew very well, ſought to take him and kill him (x. 39.) yet Love being as ſtrong as Death, carried him through all impediments: He could not chuſe but go, when he heard this charming word, *He whom thou loveſt* is ſick.

By which we may learn that to obtain the favour and grace, the help and aſſiſtance, the comfort and the preſence of our Bleſſed Saviour, we need no long Petitions, no great Addreſs of Words, no Courtſhip, nor ſtudied Complements. Let us be able only to tell him, that he loves us; and it is enough. If we can but win his good affection, we need no more. We may then remember to him his own dear love more than ours. We may tell him how much good he hath done us, and that is Argument ſufficient to move him to do more.

We may relate his graciouſneſs and ſweet diſpoſition; when we can perceive in our own hearts, but diſguſts at our ſelves. We may ſay, O my Lord, I have ſeen by many Arguments the wonderful great

great good will thou beareſt to me. For thou haſt inſtructed my ignorance, pitied my weakneſſes, cured many of my Diſeaſes, delivered me from the power of temptations; I cannot tell what thou haſt done for me, O moſt merciful Saviour, who art ſtill going on, by innumerable ways, to teſtifie thou loveſt me. And this humble devout acknowledgement, will certainly invite a further effuſion of his favours. For it is a pleaſure to him to do benefits; eſpecially to thoſe he loves. He rejoyces over them to do them good. He loves to accompliſh his own good purpoſes, and delights, as much as they can deſire, to perfect what he hath happily begun in them. And therefore we may entreat him to give himſelf that pleaſure; not to loſe any of that joy, which will ſo much pleaſe and rejoyce us alſo; and make us his Debtors, his Admirers, his Adorers, and Lovers to all Eternity.

We may deſire him, even that it would pleaſe him to come again, according to his promiſe; becauſe he loves us, and becauſe he loves to finiſh his works of love: and we may be confident he will, and bring his rewards with him. Though he ſtay,

ſtay, we think, a great while (for certain reaſons which he beſt knows) before he come; as he ſtayed two days after he heard of *Lazarus*'s ſickneſs, (notwithſtanding the love he had for him, and his intentions to reſcue him from Death:) yet we ought not to be diſcouraged, if we be ſure he loves us; but believe that he will appear at laſt, and that he will raiſe us up, though we lye dead in our Graves, and have lain ſo perhaps many years, and that he will bid us come forth, and go along with him, whither his endleſs love will lead us.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

A continuation of the former Argument, concerning the mighty power of the Divine Love; and the Benefit we have by loving our Lord's Appearing.

HAve we not great reaſon then to love him, and to love his Appearing: ſince that will be the beſt Argument of his love to us; and his love, you ſee, will prove ſuch an aſſurance of all his Bleſſings? What will move us, if this cannot do it? Need there any thing more be ſaid, to draw our affections towards him? If there do, then let me aſſure you, that love will even transform us into him.

There is nothing more diſcernible in this paſſion, than that it aſſimilates us unto the Thing or Perſon which we love.

Which

Which ſhould teach us indeed to have a great care what and whom we love; but ſhould excite us to love him, our Dearest Lord, without any meaſure: Becauſe nothing is ſo deſireable as to be like to him; and nothing can prepare us ſo ſurely for his glorious Appearing. *In that which every man loves, in that he lives*, ſaith S^t *Auſtin* upon thoſe words of the great Apoſtle S^t *Paul* [*not I live, but Chriſt liveth in me.*] So great, ſo mighty a thing is true love; that it carries the heart from the place where it is, and tranſlates it thither where it loves. If thou loveſt thy ſelf merely, then thou liveſt altogether in thy ſelf: But if thy heart be ſet on any other perſon or thing, then thou liveſt in that which hath engaged thy affection: And if it be Jeſus whom thou loveſt in ſincerity, it is certain that in him alſo thou liveſt.

Of ſo great importance it is, that we love aright: For he that loves ill, lives ill; and he that loves well, cannot but live well too. But there is no danger at all in loving our Lord and his Appearing: and therefore we need not ſtand to aſk our ſelves whether we ſhould love him

him or no; or how much we shall love him; or with what passion and concernment we should set our hearts upon his coming again, to take us into his Glory. There is nothing to hinder us, from loving here as much as ever we are able; no fear our affections should be too far engaged, as they may be in other cases; all that caution is useless here, which, when we are in pursuit of lesser injoyments, is but necessary to put a check upon our hearts, and cool a little our love towards them. The more we love him, the more we shall be like him: the more we love him, the more we shall live in him. This love makes us divine and heavenly; it purifies us, and makes us fit to live with him.

I must add also that, according to this rule, by *loving his Appearing*, we shall be formed to some likeness of it; as much as we are capable here to be wrought and fashioned to an imitation of a thing so bright and full of glory. It will raise our minds, that is, to a noble pitch; and highly improve our degenerate nature. It will invite him to manifest himself to us, and graciously to shine upon us. It will possess us with a lively sense of him, and of the Glory wherein he lives. The

light of his countenance will be lifted up on our ſouls; and he will fill us with a ſtronger ſenſe of life and immortality. It will chaſe away the baſe fear of death; and kill all vicious affections in us. We ſhall be purified, and refined from all our droſs, by theſe holy fires. There is no ſin will be able to live in the ſame place with this heavenly love: but will continually languiſh and decay, as this increaſes and grows ſtronger in our Souls. Our Spirits thereby will become more cheerful, light and aërial. They will aſcend more eaſily towards thoſe celeſtial places; and be leſs inclined, though they feel its attractions, toward this lower World. O what a Coronet of Glory, will this love place before-hand on our head! It is it ſelf a Royal Ornament, and a Diadem of Glory. It's a participation of a Divine Nature, an entrance upon the life of God, an Heaven upon Earth, a pleaſure whereby we anticipate the joys of the other world: for if all love have a ſweetneſs in it, this Divine love ſure cannot but entertain us with a tranſcendent ſatisfaction.

By this we have our converſation in Heaven; and it is there only to be *ever with the Lord* (as much as our condition here

here will give us leave) for nothing but love will make him familiar to our thoughts, and present him frequently to the eye of our minds. Yea, this is the best Glass we have, while we are here below, wherein to *see God*. If there be any way to know the meaning of those words, we must learn it of this Teacher; which alone can discover to us so great a mystery. Nothing else can lead us into that secrecy, and reveal to us what lies hid in that retirement, *the Vision of God*. Never hope for any Key to open a Door into the Holy of Holies; unless it be this of heavenly love. If it be possible to peep a little behind the Veil; it is love only that enjoys so singular a priviledge. For God, you see, is love: and the Apostle tells us, that when Faith and Hope shall be done away, it is Charity alone that still remains; as a thing of longer duration than this World, and whose proper place is Heaven. This is one of the Cherubims of Glory, that inhabits the most holy place, and attends upon the Majesty on high. This is of an Angelical Nature, and is always there where God is. It waits upon him; it ministers to him; it knows his mind; it is privy

to his thoughts and deſigns; and makes us underſtand more of him, than all the wit in the World can do beſide.

There is nothing can lend wings to the Soul, but only love: which raiſes us above this World, and ſets us in the preſence of him that made it. And what a ſight doth it give us there, of his boundleſs, bottomleſs Goodneſs? If it can ſhow us nothing elſe, it will not fail to let us ſee how gracious, how wonderfully gracious the Lord is. With what kindneſs doth love behold Almighty Providence, ſpreading it ſelf in tender mercy over all its Works? It is this alone can make us feel how inclinable the Divine Nature is, to pour out its Benefits. Nothing but love can make us know what an everlaſting Spring it is of Grace and Bounty; and with what unwearied kindneſs it delights to communicate its Bleſſings to us. And what is there that we would ſee, which is comparable to this? What can we deſire to ſee, but more of this; even when we are made perfect in love? And what thanks do we owe to God that we ſee ſo much? It ought to ſtir up all that is within us, to bleſs his holy Name. We ought to ſay; *every*

day

day will I bleſs thee, and praiſe thy name for ever and ever.

But for this alſo we muſt be beholden to love. For it is that which indicts all our Hymns, and meditates the Divine Praiſes. It puts the Songs of Joy into our mouth; and fills our hearts with thankſgiving. Our tongues are tyed without this; or we do but babble, not ſpeak, our Saviour's praiſes.

It is love that burſts out into ſuch effuſions as theſe:

O praiſe the Lord of love, who humbled himſelf to dwell among us. Praiſe him in the beauties of his holineſs; praiſe him in his ſuper-excellent Wiſdom. Let all his works praiſe him; who came to us with his hands full of Miracles, and every Miracle full of mercy. O praiſe him in his Almighty and moſt merciful kindneſs; which made the lame to leap like a Kid, and the tongue of the dumb to ſing for joy: which opened the eyes of the blind to ſee his wonders; and the ears of the deaf to hear the Wiſdom whereby he ſpake: which reſtored the ſick to health, and the dead to life: which publiſhed the Goſpel to the poor, and inſtruct-

ed the ignorant in the myſteries of the Kingdom of God.

O praiſe him, before whom the Devils fled, and confeſſed him to be the Lord. Praiſe him in his incomparable love; which thought it not enough to do all this, but alſo gave himſelf to dye for us. Let all Nations praiſe him, who are the purchaſe of his blood. Let them mark every ſtep of his dying love; from the time he was betrayed and ſold like a Slave, till he finiſhed his ſufferings on the Croſs. O the greatneſs of that love, which endured ſuch ſcorn, ſuch reproach, ſuch a bitter agony and ſhameful death, even for all thoſe who have little ſenſe of this wondrous love!

But let no Chriſtian Soul be inſenſible, how the hands which wrought ſo many Miracles, and the feet which travelled up and down to do men good, were cruelly nailed by them to an ignominious Gibbet. Let them remember how his head was crowned with thorns, and his body clothed in a fool's coat. How they ſpit in his face, blinded his eyes, and then rudely buffeted him to make them ſport. O what love was that, which made him ſubmit to be mocked and reviled, to be accounted worſe than a ſeditious murderer, and numbred among the

greateſt

greateſt Tranſgreſſors! And above all, let it never be forgotten how he ſweat in our ſervice, as it had been drops of blood; and at laſt bled to death, after three hours ſhame and anguiſh on the Croſs.

Praiſed be that incomparable Charity. Praiſed be his inimitable meekneſs and humility. Let all the World extol and praiſe his Lamb-like patience and innocence. Let them celebrate his admirable kindneſs in forgiving ſuch implacable Enemies; and his intire confidence and faith in God, whereby he offered up himſelf to him, and obtained an eternal redemption for us. O the wonderful Vertue of that Sacrifice, which hath taken away the ſins of the World! Praiſed be the tender mercies of our God, which have forgiven us ſo many treſpaſſes. Praiſed be his mercies, which have not only forgiven us; but reſtored us to life and glory again, by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead.

Let us rejoyce and be glad in that great ſalvation. Let us bleſs the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by that reſurrection of his from the dead. Let us lift up our heads, and look to Heaven our ancient

Country, for there he is exalted: And let us thank our God, who hath ſet him at his own right hand, and made him moſt glorious for ever.

See how all the Angels welcomed him thither; and falling at his feet, moſt humbly worſhipped his Majeſty. See how they all now wait upon him, and conſtantly attend his pleaſure. And let us worſhip him too, with the devouteſt and moſt lowly reverence. Let us praiſe him in his Sanctuary: where he appears before God for us; from whence he ſends down the gracious influences of his Spirit on us; and commands his Angels to miniſter unto us. Let us praiſe him, the glorious King of Angels and men. Who hath conquered death; and triumphed over all the powers of darkneſs; and opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all the faithful, hath promiſed that they ſhall reign in Glory together with him.

Let all the Angelical Miniſters praiſe him. Let the Apoſtles, Prophets and Martyrs praiſe him. Let all thoſe who are departed in the true faith and fear of him, praiſe him. And let all the living, who partake of the daily fruits of his bounteous love, continually praiſe him. Let them praiſe the name of the Lord: for his name

alone

alone is excellent, his Glory is above the Earth and Heaven.

Let them praise him in the Greatness of his Power, in the Wisdom of his Counsels, in the carefulness of his Providence, in the riches, the exceeding riches of his Grace, in the stedfastness of his word, and the faithfulness of all his promises. And let them all joyn together and beseech him to come again; that he may both accomplish our hopes, and perfect his own praises.

O let him come, that we may give him better praises, in one Body for ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

More Expreſſions of this devout affection, towards our Lord's Appearing; and the way whereby we may excite them.

THIS is ſome of the language of Love; which wiſhes every knee would bow to Jeſus, and every tongue confeſs that he is the Lord; to the Glory of God the Father, who hath thus highly exalted him. For its deſires are unlimited; and its kindneſs, like the Fountain of it, is inexhauſtible and infinite. It is the brighteſt image of Jeſus. There is nothing repreſents him ſo lively to the World. He now appears moſt in thoſe who love moſt; and who long and wait with pure and ardent deſires to ſee him come in all his Glory. For they will *keep his commandment without ſpot, unrebukable, until his Appearing: which*

in

in his times he will shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Why then, O my Soul, do we not let this blessed Guest be lodged in our heart? Or why do we not entertain it so that it may stay with us; and we may feel it stirring there in restless motions towards Jesus? What is the cause that we who are made to love, should not let our love turn Divine; and address it most devoutly to him, who best deserves the love of all the World? Or what may it be, that keeps us from running with the whole current of our affections, towards that heavenly Lover; who sues so earnestly to us for our hearty love? Hath he not loved us enough to make us love him? Was he a cold and indifferent Lover, that could not touch the heart with a sense of his kindness? Was he perfectly frozen and careless in our concerns, when the urgent wants of our souls, called for his kind and compassionate relief? Or did he pretend

pretend a great deal of kindneſs, and made long proteſtations of his love; but did juſt nothing to merit our affection?

There need no Anſwer to ſuch Queſtions; which ſerve only to reproach and confound our inſenſibleneſs and negligence; who have nothing to ſay, why we do not love him. For ſo apparent is his love, ſo confeſſedly great, ſo coſtly and expenſive, ſo tender and obliging; that as it had no example, nor can be ever exactly imitated; ſo it muſt needs attract all thoſe and fill them with the greateſt love, who do not turn away their eyes, and their ears, and their hearts from this Lord of love.

Let us but liſten a while to him, and we ſhall hear him ſay, Was there any love like unto my love? What is it that you would have had me done for you, more than I have done (without your deſire) to win your love? Hath any man greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his Friends? But what were you, for whom I died? Herein God commended his love towards you, in that while you were yet Sinners, I dyed for you. And what was the purchaſe I made by that price, which I laid down for you? Who is it that hath the Keys of Hell and Death? To whom is all

power

power given in Heaven and in Earth? Can any but I forgive your sins; and open to you the Kingdom of Heaven; and restore you the joys of Paradise; nay, make you eat of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God?

Where do you read of any King, who, at his Coronation, gave such Royal gifts to men? From whom do you expect the Crown of righteousness, and an eternal inheritance; of which I gave the Earnest so long ago? Can you think of any thing comparable to the Glory of my Appearing? Or is there any doubt whether I will come or no; or whether you shall appear with me in that Celestial Glory? What would you have me do to satisfie and assure you, more than I have already done; by my Word, and by my Blood, and by my Angels, and by my Holy Spirit; which I have sent down from Heaven to bear witness to me, and to tell you that I will certainly come again, and give you the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world? Believe it, I will as surely come again, as I died; and rose from the dead; and visibly ascended into Heaven; and according to my promise poured out the Holy Ghost upon my Apostles, and inspired them to proclaim

this

this in all tongues and languages; that I ſtill live; and that, becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo.

And is it poſſible for us to think we hear him ſpeaking to us in this manner (as he doth in his bleſſed Goſpel) and not be provoked to ſummon all the powers of our ſoul, to offer up themſelves in devout and hearty love to him? What hath the deareſt friend, whom we love with ſo much paſſion; nay, even our tenderest Parents done for us, in compariſon with this love? Or what can the favour of all the Princes on Earth (ſhould they unite all their powers to love and honour us) beſtow and heap upon us, worthy to be named together with this miraculous love? It ought to call us from all vain delights. Our minds ſhould continually ſtudy to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and heighth: and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge. Our wills ought to be more paſſionately bent towards him; and grow every day ſtronger in his love. Our memories ſhould be a moſt faithful Treaſury of the manifold tokens of his Love. Our tongues and our hearts ſhould never ceaſe to medicate and ſing the praiſes of his wondrous love. For

For if we could ſpeak to him (as we may conceive him ſpeaking to us) and ask him what he did before the World; he would tell us that, *He loved.* If we could ask him what moved his Almighty Wiſdom to make the World; he would tell you that *He loved.* If we could further ask what he hath done ever ſince; he would ſtill ſay, *He loved.* And what brought him down from Heaven (if we could ask again) to be Partaker of our miſeries; he would tell you again that *He loved.* And could we ask again why he would humble himſelf ſo low as to take the form of a Servant, and dye a baſe, ſervile and ignominious death, the death of the Croſs, he would again tell you, that *He loved.* And if you could ſtill go on to ask what moved him to ſend the Holy Ghoſt, and give ſuch gifts to men; you would ſtill receive the ſame Anſwer, becauſe *He loved.* And could you beſeech him not to be angry and you would inquire again, what he hath been doing ſince thoſe days, and what he now does; he would give you no new Anſwer, but that *He loves.* And if you ſhould pray him once more to tell you *what He loves*; he would let you know, it is nothing but *love, abundance of love.* This

This is the thing he would win by his love. This is all that he asks and desires at our hands; though he hath obliged us so much. For this he solicites and beseeches; having set his heart upon it, as the fruit of his incomparable love. He intreats for this, as if it were for his life, that we would be at last so sensible of all his kindness, as to let him have our unfeigned love. For he being Love himself, loves nothing else but sincere and hearty love.

O blessed Jesus, should all our hearts then say, *How much doth thy love differ from ours! Love brought thee down from Heaven to us; but how few of us (and how slowly) doth it carry up thither unto thee? Love made thee dye the most shameful death; but it doth not make us live the most glorious life. It made thee endure the sorest pains; but, alas! it doth not make mankind take the pleasure of following thy steps to the greatest happiness. It made thee think perpetually on such poor wretches as we are; but how seldom are our minds fixed, or how small is the number whom love inclines to think, upon so glorious a person as thy self?* It

It perswaded thee to come to us, when there was nothing to call thee but only our great miseries; but it doth not bring us all to thee, when we are moved by the merits, and the precious promises of so great a love. Thy Preaching was Love, thy Miracles were love, thy whole Life was love, thy Death was the most singular love, thy last breath, in a manner, was love, one of thy last words was love, even to the bittereſt Enemies, thy Sacraments are love, the Holy Ghost the Comforter is love, thy Ambassadours were love, thou art, we see, All love; and yet, dull and stupid Blocks that we are, we are nothing less than this Divine love.

O sweet Saviour, what wilt thou do with such vile, such wretched hearts, as these of ours? Canst thou endure so much as to look upon such Souls, as are so frozen before thy fires? Canst thou shed one Beam more upon such icy hearts, that are so insensible of all thy flames? Is it possible that thou shouldest be so patient, as to bear with the prayers of those, whose breasts are so full of love, so propense to this affection, so free to pour it out to every thing; and yet allow so few or no drops of it unto thee, who deservest all the love we have?

O Dearest Lord, if there be any room still left in thy heart for such as we are, be pleased once more to cast thine eyes upon us, most miserable Sinners. If thou canst lend thine ears to the requests of such foolish, such obstinate hearts, as have been so senslesly deaf to all thy gracious intreaties; hear the sighs and the groans of all those penitent Souls who cry unto thee, and say, Lord Jesus look upon us. Spare us, Good Lord, if it be but one dram of thy pity and tendereſt compassion. O spare us but the least touch more from thine all-powerful hand; if thou art not weary of striking such rocky hearts, as now petition thee for thy love. O mollifie them, most gracious Lord, mollifie them, we beseech thee, with thy Dear Love towards us. Now that they are a little tender and yielding to thee, melt and dissolve them into the like love towards thee. Enter into all our hearts; O that thou wouldst enter, and fill them with thy love. Overcome them with this powerful Engine, thy mighty, thy wonderful Love.

Thy love, I say, thy most stupendous love; for no word pleases me so much as love. Give me leave therefore to repeat it over again, and to pray thee by thy love,

by

by thy dear and tender love, that thou wilt not pass by this heart of mine (among all the rest) which now at last would fain be replenished with thy love. I lye here in the humblest devotion prostrate at thy feet, and, gasping there before thee, my Soul pants and says; O Love, inspire me! O Love, breathe thy Soul and Life into me! As thou hast overcome, so possess this heart intirely, and vouchsafe to dwell in me.

And do thou, my incomprehensibly loving Saviour, make me ever thus to sigh and groan, out of the very Center of mine heart, after thee. Make me always to be saying thus to thee; O my life, my joy, my hope, my all, do not despise this languishing Soul, which intreats thee to dwell in it, by thy surpassing love. Draw me after thee, and touch me so, that I may look upon nothing so much as thy love. Turn my heart about; and bend it wholly to thy love. Make me to speak of nothing, with such delight, as of thy love; to breathe nothing, to study nothing, to desire, to do nothing, but only love.

Let no day, at least, pass without some serious meditations of thy love. Let no Sun shine, but what shows me thee and thy love, shining brighter by far upon me.

Let no night close mine eyes, but do thou shut up a sense of thy self and thy love in my breast. Let no friend come to visit me, but give him thy love to bring along with him; and let him present thy self unto me. Let the sight of him enkindle thy love in me. Let the embraces of him, knit me in faster affection to thee. Let the remembrance of him and his kindness, recal to mind thy infinitely greater love to me. Let every motion of my heart towards him, rest at last in the love of thee: who art the hope and the satisfaction both of him and me.

Still may I therefore think of thee more frequently. Still may I desire thee more passionately. Still may I obey thee more universally. May the following acts of love and Vertue, still out-strip the former: and one conquest of my self, make way for a nobler. May thine Almighty love still grow and prevail; till there be no affection that dare appear, no passion that dare presume to show its head, against the sovereign power of thy love in mine heart.

And now, O my Lord, I know not how to leave thee, until I hear thee say, Thou lovest me. Prostrate still will I here lye

at thy feet, for I cannot have the heart to rise up again; unless thou wilt speak that kind, that gracious word, and tell me, that thou dost not cease to love me. Nay, I dye unless thou lovest me. I shall make my Grave here in this very place; and expire with these words in my mouth; LORD, WHETHER I LIVE OR DYE IT MATTERS NOT; LET ME BUT KNOW THAT THOU LOVEST ME.

And may I be so bold as to conclude thou hast some love to me, because I feel my heart beat thus passionately towards thee, and my Soul thirsts and crys thus after thee? Will it not be too great a presumption to think thou hast not forsaken me, because I cannot forsake my request; but above all things long and labour to be beloved of thee? Is this love thou hast wrought in my heart to thee, an incouragement to hope thou lovest me? Truly then, my Lord, I am well satisfied. Then I know thou beareſt a favour to me. For my Soul follows hard after thee; it cleaves unto thee; it loves thy memory; and delights it self in thy Commandments.

It ſays continually, nothing but more of thy love; nothing, but abundance of thy love. I open my heart unto thy exuberant love. I expoſe my ſelf to the power of thy tranſcendent love. I chuſe and deſire the pleaſures of thy love; above all the delights, wherewith the World can entertain me. Above the admired heaps of Wealth, and the dazling heighths of honour. Above the loudeſt praiſes of fame, and the bewitching applauſe of numerous Spectators. Above the charms of beauty, and the more inticing delights of curious knowledge. Nay, above the ſolid joys of health, and the moſt neceſſary refreſhments of Nature. Above all, that even thine own bounty can give, to thoſe that love thee.

O let me but love thee; make me but always thus to love thee; always deſpiſe all other delights, compared with thoſe of loving thee; do but fill my heart with that love and with thoſe delights: and I am perfectly ſatisfied. I am at reſt now I have given my ſelf to thee intirely. And if I had a thouſand hearts, they ſhould be devoted to thy ſervice, with the moſt affectionate love to thee.

But

But yet, alas! when I think of thy wondrous love, I am apt to conclude again that I did amiſs to ſay, I was ſatisfied. All this, upon better thoughts, ſeems a great deal too little; and I am as ſhort, methinks, of thy love, as if I loved thee not at all. For what have I given thee, when I have paid thee all my acknowledgements? What have I beſtoved on thee, when I have given thee my ſelf, and abſolutely offered all my affections to thee? What is my heart, what are a thouſand ſuch hearts as this worth; that I ſhould think ſuch a Preſent will be of any eſteem with thee? If all my life were nothing elſe, but the moſt affectionate, the moſt cheerful obedience to thee; what requital ſhould I have made thee for all thy love to me?

Alas! I have ſo little ability to do any thing worthy of thee; that I have not the skill how to ſpeak, as becomes me, of my Duty to thee. What do I talk of acknowledgements to thee? That's as if I could number or value thy favours. And it is a worſe abſurdity to ſpeak of giving thee my affections (as if I were not a Debtor to thee) and of beſtowing my heart on thee; For that's as if I had any thing

I received not from thee. But it is worſt of all (I am aſhamed of it) to mention a requital of thy favours; for that's as if they were ſo ſmall or ſo few, as to admit of any return like a recompence unto thee.

No, No, I am nothing at all. I have nothing, I can do juſt nothing, but what is thine more than mine; if it be worth any thing. I here moſt ſolemnly proteſt that I think my ſelf indebted to thee, for all I have. I my ſelf am thine; my love is thine; my prayers and deſires are thine; my praiſes and thanksgivings are thine; ſo is my Faith and my Hope, my comforts and my joys, they are all thine. I cannot ſo much as confeſs my debts and obligations; but it is from thee. I cannot be ſenſible of my faults; but I contract a new Debt to thee. That I can ſo much as ſee and ſay, I am nothing, I owe it unto thee?

What ſhall I do therefore? How ſhall I expreſs my ſelf to thee? Or in what manner ſhall I approach thee? All that I can think of is only this: ſtill to caſt down my ſelf in the humbleſt devotion befre thee, and all thawed and diſſolved with thy love to pour out my heart unto thee, ſaying;

saying; LORD, WORK THINE OWN GOOD PLEASURE IN ME. Make me what thou thy self best likest and lovest. And when thou hast loved and obliged me as much as thou pleasest here; compleat thine own benefits and crown them with as great a Glory, as thine own great love can bestow hereafter.

A

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

The Concluſion.

AND here I think it is beſt to put a period to this Diſcourſe; which is already come to a competent length. For where can I leave you better than in the arms of our Lord; intirely reſolved into his Will, and wiſhing to be united to him, and made one Spirit with him, as much as he pleaſes? And yet how hard is it to ceaſe to deſire that happineſs, in its utmoſt perfection? How can we chuſe but ask him leave, at leaſt to repeat that wiſh over again? The very thoughts of it make the raviſhed Soul, thruſt it ſelf with the more ardent affection into the boſom of his love. They ſtir it up to ply him with new Petitions, that he will draw it more ſtrongly after him, and knit it more cloſely to him: that he will inſpire it

it with more of his love, and, by perfecting his likeneſs in it, inſeparably unite it to himſelf.

O bleſſed Jeſus, ſurely thou wilt appear: I believe in due time thou wilt appear. I am fully perſwaded thou wilt not fail to make good thy word; of coming to fetch us to thy ſelf, and making us exceedingly more happy than now, in our moſt inlarged thoughts, we can conceive. I ſee, methinks, the Sky cleave, and the day break, and the Arch-angel, thy Harbinger, begin to look forth and thruſt his head out of the Clouds: which makes my heart leap for joy; as if it would leave this World, and inſtantly go to meet thee, my infinitely Dearer Saviour.

For what ſplendor is there in Gold, that I ſhould deſire it? What brightneſs in precious Stones? What ornament in the moſt ſumptuous Apparel, compared with that Good which our hope in thee ſuppoſes, and ſets before us? When thou who reigneſt over all creatures, ſhalt reveal thy ſelf to mankind, ſitting moſt magnificently upon a lofty Throne; when innumerable millions of Angels ſhall

Greg. Nyſſen. Orat. V. in Beatit.

ſhall be ſeen about thee; and when the Kingdom of Heaven, which now is ſuch a Secret, ſhall be ſet wide open before all our eyes.

O let the thoughts of the Trump of God, which ſhall then ſound, awaken my Soul more powerfully, to lift up it ſelf to look for thee; and for that glorious ſight, thou wilt bleſs us withal, at thy Appearing! O let the faith that is in thy heart grow daily more active, and work in me a moſt vigorous love of thee! And let my love be inlarged, till this heart be ſtretched to its utmoſt capacity; and thou, the infinite Good, ſtill fill and overflow it. For I am afraid thou ſhouldeſt come and find me unprepared for thee. I would not for all the World be found unready to meet thee; and unfit for the bleſſings thou wilt bring along with thee.

If an heart that deſires thee moſt paſſionately be of any worth; if thou canſt have any kind thoughts of a mind that prefers thee and thy love, above all other things: if to love thine Appearing, far more than the moſt glorious condition wherein a man can poſſibly appear in mortal fleſh, can find

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any Grace in thine eyes; behold then a Soul that is able to say, through thy great Goodness, that it most earnestly longs for thee. See here an heart that desires to be like thee; that had rather dye than displease thee: and that will welcome thy coming with more joy, than a sick man, wearied with the restlesness of a long night, doth the morning-light; or a Traveller doth his much-desired home; or a Virgin espoused doth her long-absent Bridegroom, the dearly beloved of her Soul.

It is thou who hast begot in me these longings. I have received all thou seest in me from thy gracious hands; which have made me, and fashioned me; and made me unsatisfied in any thing, but thee, and thy love. O let not these pious longings also be unsatisfied. Let me not want the pleasures from which I have turned mine eyes away here; and those pleasures too, which I look for so earnestly, and promise my self at thine Appearing.

But let the same reason which moved thee to give me so much, incline thee to give me more. Let that mighty love which hath wrought in me desires, bring me to the enjoyment. And after thou hast pleased thy bounty, in making me receive as much

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as thou wilt in this present state; let it be thy pleasure to receive me to thee in a better: and by giving me all I would have, in the sight I expect of thee, to leave no desires remaining in me. Amen *and* Amen.

THE END.

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